MANDUKYA UPANISHAD & KARIKA

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Transcribed and edited

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INTRODUCTION

Pranam Mantra

ॐ भद्रं कर्णेभिः शृणुयाम देवाः ।
भद्रं पश्येमाक्षभिर्यजत्राः ।
स्थिरैरङ्गैस्तुष्टुवाग्ँसस्तनूभिः ।
व्यशेम देवहितं यदायुः
स्वस्ति न इन्द्रो वृद्धश्रवाः ।
स्वस्ति नः पूषा विश्ववेदाः ।
स्वस्ति नस्तार्क्ष्यो अरिष्टनेमिः ।
स्वस्ति नो बृहस्पतिर्दधातु ॥
ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥
oṃ bhadraṃ karṇebhiḥ śṛṇuyāma devāḥ |
bhadraṃ paśyemākṣabhiryajatrāḥ |
sthirairaṅgaistuṣṭuvāgṁsastanūbhiḥ |
vyaśema devahitaṃ yadāyuḥ
svasti na indro vṛddhaśravāḥ |
svasti naḥ pūṣā viśvavedāḥ |
svasti nastārkṣyo ariṣṭanemiḥ |
svasti no bṛhaspatirdadhātu ||
oṃ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ ||

O God! May we hear auspicious words, and may we see what is good. And, may be strong in our limbs and body and sing your praise, and also enjoy the life span allotted to us by Prajapati.
May Indra the great God, ensure our all-round well-being. Sun may ensure our all-round wellbeing. May Garuda, the divine bird, who saves all the creatures may ensure our all-round wellbeing and Brihaspati, the God of knowledge ensure our all-round well-being.
These prayers are called Shanti Mantra. The beauty of these mantras is that they do not demand anything. They say that I am what I am. Give me a strong personality and make the forces working within me strong, so that I can attain the highest state.
Every Upanishad has a prayer attached with it. This is the prayer for Mandukya Upanishad. Mandukya Upanishad has just twelve mantras. It is the shortest Upanishad that we have

and there is a Karika, the explanatory verses, by Gaudapada.
Before we start with the actual Mandukya Upanishad, let us have a brief understanding of Vedanta to set the foundation right.

1. Vedanta - What and Why?

The Upanishads discuss Vedanta. Vedanta is now very popular, particularly after Swamiji popularised it in the west.
We will first give a short overview of Vedanta. This will ensure that our understanding is ready to study Mandukya Upanishad.
Vedanta is a philosophy. Philosophy is generally of two types; philosophy of a subject and philosophy of life. Philosophy means “to know”. When it comes to philosophy of a subject, we can have philosophy of Medicine, philosophy of science, philosophy of History etc. We also have philosophy of Life. Vedanta is philosophy of life not philosophy of any subject.
In these philosophies, whether it is philosophy of a subject or philosophy of life, we find two divisions.
There are philosophers, or a thinker or a teacher, who present their opinions, based on a line of thought, a thought process, like Socrates, Plato or Hegel or Immanuel Kant. They all belong to the line of thinkers. They had a thought process and they presented that thought process, and wherever that thought process led them to. Aristotle also had his line of thought, but he also observed things and from those observations he concluded.
But in India, this kind of thought process has absolutely no value. The way one thinks today, may change tomorrow. People think in one way and conclude in a way during their teens, but later with time and age, ideas and conclusions can change. In Indian tradition, we do not accept an idea, if it is based on only pure logic. It has to be backed up by actual experience, observations and there should be direct knowledge. Without this we cannot accept any opinion, however great the scholar may be.
In India philosophy was therefore called Darshan. In Sanskrit, the word Darshan, means seeing, and it comes from Drish dhatu (to see).
The Vedic sages, who composed the great Vedas, were called Rishis. Rishis mean seers, those who have seen, and arrived at the truth.
Thus, there is a fundamental difference between the western thought process and Indian thought process. In India, Rishis boldly say I have seen it. In The famous mantra *Srinawntu Vishwaye Amritasya Putra*, Rishis say boldly “I have seen it”.
Shri Ramakrishna, whenever there was an argument, he would often say, why would I listen

to you? I have seen it like this. Next question comes, why should I believe what you have seen? Swami Vivekananda, then Narendranath, used to question him.
These sages were pure, unselfish and dedicated to the subject. They had no ulterior motive. So, they had no motive to lie.
But more importantly the Rishis used to say, if I have seen it and you too can see. Just like Shri Ramakrishna, who said to Swami Vivekananda, “I have seen God and you too can see Him”.
In this Mantra, *Srinawntu Vishwaye Amritasya Putra,* there also it says that you have to see it. The Vedas are all about that; “I have seen it and you too can see it”. In the Yog shastra, where they speak of Samadhi and freedom, they say it is practical application, and no grand theory. You practise and see.
These sages, maybe seven, eight or maybe ten thousand years ago, in India, on the banks of River Indus (Sindhu) went into deep meditation and came to know about this truth. These truths were recorded and came to be known as the Vedas. Even in recent times, sages like Shree Ramakrishna or Ramana Maharshi went deep meditation and realised the truth.
The later Rishis, wanted to work out the meaning of Veda, all that they wanted to say. They came out with six different popular philosophies known as Orthodox philosophy or Astik Darshan. These are Sankhya, Yog, Naya, Vaisheshika, Mimansa and Vedanta. Of these six, Vedanta became very popular. Vedanta literally means “Veda Anta”, the End of Vedas.
Vedas have four distinct sections: Sangeeta (about the Mantras), Brahman (about the Rituals), Aranyak (About contemplation) and Upanishad (about realisation).
There is no speculation in the Upanishads. They just narrate the truth, the way these sages perceived them. There is a fundamental difference between the first section of Veda, the Mantras, and the Upanishad. The Mantra part, the first part of Vedas, are more like prayers. So, there may be some additions of some words or ideas. But in Upanishads, the truths are as raw as they can be.
As said earlier, Vedanta is called Vedanta as it comes at the end of the Vedas, i.e, Ved anta (anta means end). But anta or the end also means purpose, and so it also means the purpose of the Vedas. Great sage Shankaracharya says, the purpose of the Vedas is to specifically say the Man is Divine.
The whole of Vedas, is talking about prayers, the rituals and talking about attaining heaven, but the ultimate purpose is to know that you are Divine, you are pure. This is the final knowledge of a Man; I am Divine, I am pure. And that is why Vedanta is called Vedanta. And specifically, the Upanishads that come at the end, (Mantra, Brahman, Aranyak and Upanishad, four parts of Vedas) are the foundation books of the Vedanta.
Later, the great sage, philosopher and poet, Vyasa, wrote 555 sentences, known as Brahmasutra, to codify the Vedanta. Then there was Geeta, where in 700 verses, the

different aspects of Vedanta are presented. These three, The Upanishads, Brahmasutra, Geeta form the core books of the Vedanta. Brahmasutra is not so important nowadays. Acharya Shankar, in his commentary, has expressed more or less all the ideas of Upanishads and Geeta too. In the orthodox view, these three books (Brahmasutra, Geeta and Upanishads) form the core of Vedanta. But practically, only the Upanishads and Geeta are enough.

Some say there are 108, some say there are 1008 Upanishads. But Acharya Shankar has written commentaries of Ten Upanishads. There is also the eleventh, the Shvetashvatara Upanishad. There is also a commentary on it also. But one is not sure if it was written by Acharya Shankar. If we take this also, there are eleven Upanishads. These are called the Major Upanishads. Mandukya is one of these major Upanishads.

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The ten Upanishads: Isavasya, Kena, Katha, Prasna, Mundaka, Mandukya, Taittiriya, Aitareya, Chhandogya, Brihadaranyak

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As has been mentioned earlier, Vedanta is not a thought-out process. It is a result of very deep meditation by the Rishis, the ancient sages. As one goes into depth of meditation, focusing one of the teachings of these Upanishads, or Geeta or on teaching by one's guru, the mind starts becoming calm. As it gets more and more calm, the mind has only one single thought. And that one single thought is of the Divine. And then you realise that Divine is the truth. This Divinity, that Divine is the truth, is experienced in various ways. You experience that you are Divine, and that Divine controls everything and that whatever is there is Divine. And one also experiences the relationship between you (the smaller you) and the larger you, i.e., the smaller Divine within you, which is the Atma, the in-dwelling spirit and the larger Divine, the Brahma outside you, the totality.

With the permutation and combination of these three philosophies, we can create an innumerable number of philosophies. And indeed, so many philosophies were created by permutation and combination of these.

We have Dvaita, Vishista Advait, Advait, Shuddha Advait, Achintya-Bhed-Aveda and so on. There is no end to it. All these schools combined together are Vedanta.

Any school of thought that bases its outlook on Upanishads, Brahma Sutras and Geeta will be known as Vedanta. Secondly, every school of Vedanta has to say Man is Divine. These are two primary conditions a philosophy has to comply with to be called Vedanta.

Interestingly Swami Vivekananda, in one of letters, said "I have made a discovery". This is a phenomenal quotation, "All religions are contained in Vedanta." All regions, be it Islam or Christianity or Judaism or Buddhism are contained in Vedanta. This is an amazing quote. Unfortunately, this is not much highlighted.

In the three stages of Vedanta Philosophy, the Dvaita, The Vishista Advait and the Advait, the relationship between you and God are as follows. In Dvaita, although you are divine, you are separate from God. In Vishista Advait, you are linked with God in the same way as the Tree and leaf are linked. And in Advait, you are one with the Divine. You are The Universal, Individual is the universal.

These are three stages of spiritual growth and one comes after the other. Each one is necessary. Swamiji Says, “this is the essential of religion. The Vedanta applied to the various ethnic customs and creeds of India is Hinduism.”

Swamiji says that the first stage, that is Dvaita, where you see yourself as different from God, applied to ideas of ethnic groups of Europe is Christianity. Vedanta, when applied to Semitic groups, becomes Mohammedanism or Islam. The Advait, as applied in Yoga perception form is Buddhism”. If you want to be politically correct, you cannot say these words.

So, it is Vedanta which becomes Hinduism or Christianity or Buddhism or Islam, according to Swamiji.

Thus, we see, Vedanta is religion. The application varies based on different needs, surroundings and other circumstances of different nations. Every new religion that will come, will be Vedanta in some form.

Our discussion will be only on Advait Vedanta. In Advait Vedanta focus is on Shruti, Yukti and Anubhuti.

In Vedanta, if a statement is made, be it on Advait or on Dualism, that must be there in Vedas. Nothing can go out of Vedas. Secondly it must be there logically. Vedanta is the only system of thought, only religion, that focuses on arguments. It must be logically water tight. Every religion tries to be logical. But faith plays a very important role. No Christian can ever say that he can prove Christianity without the Bible. Same with Islam. No one can prove Islam without the Quran. To establish Vedanta, one does not need any book. It can be done directly. This is the beauty of Vedanta. That is what Shankaracharya, the great teacher of Advaita Vedanta did.

We need to keep in mind that, unlike any other philosophy, Vedanta is not speculative. It is a living philosophy, practical philosophy, it is a philosophy that works in our daily activities. It is to be seen everywhere. It is to be practised everywhere. It is to be applied everywhere. And whole day, whole night, you can think of Vedanta being around you and Vedanta being inside you.

Those who are not in Hindu fold, or do not want to believe in Hinduism, those who are not ready to accept the super importance of the Vedas, will not go by Shruti. Shruti means scriptures and traditions. They need Yukti (Logic). Acharya Shankar comes up with amazingly wonderful explanation. He says, first thing, the cause and effect are one and the

same. In Vedanta cause and effect are not different. For example, if the effect is not already within the cause, you could get oil from sand and not oilseeds. Pot is made from clay. Pot is already there in the clay. Certain techniques were applied by someone and the pot was shaped out of the clay. In a sense, cause and effect are one and the same. Apparently, it seems very simple. But when it comes to application, it has deep consequences. The technical term for this is Vivartavad. It means, the apparent transformation. Whenever there is a transformation, we take those transformations to be real. In reality those transformations are always apparent. Swami Vivekananda, later, talked many times about the real and the apparent. There is a fundamental difference between real transformation and apparent transformation.

Whatever transformation happens is actually apparent. When Einstein gave the famous equation $E=mc^2$, and based on that, when there was an atomic bomb, the transformation of matter into energy was not a real transformation. It was apparent. Because that energy was all along in the matter. Certain techniques were applied and the energy burst out. So, when you look at Physics, in class 6/7 you might have heard of two terms, Physical phenomenon and chemical phenomenon. In Vedanta, everything is actually a physical phenomenon. When we make curd out of milk or butter out of milk, the change is not real but apparent. Butter was already there in the milk. Can you put it back? That is not the question. The main thing is, that the effect was already in the cause.

So, from there it comes that, when we perceive an object, in whatever form, two perceptions work simultaneously. One is the object itself and the other is the existence of the object. If an object is destroyed, another object may be there. Even if all the objects are destroyed, the idea of the object will continue. So, Acharya Shankar says, every state of mind, including dream, is associated with an idea. And existence as an idea, runs through all the states of mind, inside and outside. When we shall study Mandukya Upanishad with Karika, we shall find various states of mind, like waking state, dream state, dreamless state etc being discussed, and existence as an idea running through all the states, whether that state is internal or the state be external. Whether it is understanding only through the mind or when we look at the external world, existence continues. Existence as an idea can never be destroyed. Because the moment you form an idea, there is existence.

Acharya Shankar, who formalised Vedanta thoroughly, also says existence is thus, both the material cause and as well as the substance. For example, in the example of clay and pot. Here clay is the material cause and substance and also the instrument through which the form changes. Existence alone is everything in this great theatre of the Universe, it is the substance, the material cause, the efficient cause, everything is existence. This existence causes determinate objects that we see all around us. It also gives rise to mental states, i.e., waking state, dream state and dreamless state. This pure existence, when everything is

destroyed, is formless, as can be seen when one is in a dreamless state. There one doesn't see anything, doesn't perceive anything, and yet when one wakes up, one has this feeling that it continued through this dream state. So, existence, completely formless, continues throughout. And this formless existence appears as forms.

Whenever there is a mental state, we are conscious. Conscious means that the object has to be self-revealing. An object has to be self-revealing. Only then we become conscious of it. So, existence, internal and external, that we discussed just now, must possess the power of self-revealing. Without this we cannot be aware of it. So absolute existence, which we call Sat, is of the nature of self-revealing consciousness. Since it is self-revealing consciousness, it is pure consciousness, it is Chit. What is Sat is Chit. Persistence is the mark of reality. If an object has to be real. Real means there has to be continuity. If an object is present only in the present, then there is an exclusion. If it is here today and gone tomorrow, then it is not real. If an object gets destroyed, there is an exclusion. So, these two terms persistence and exclusion, mean real and unreal respectively. Pure existence is known as Sat, which has the power to self-reveal. This is Sat and this is Chit. What is Sat, that is what is existence, is pure consciousness.

Whether we are awake or dreaming or in dreamless state, the idea of bliss continues. So even when apparently, we are not aware of ourselves, the sense of bliss continues. And we know that there is only one existence. So, the existence, which was self-revealing, has to be blissed because we are aware of bliss. I am actually over-simplifying the thing, but I have presented the full thing.

When you get up from a dreamless state, you say, Oh! I slept so well. I remember nothing, but I feel so fresh. So, this idea of awareness, you do not remember anything but you remember that you had bliss. So somehow the bliss continued. Earlier we saw that only self-revealing objects can become conscious for us. And existence is this ultimate self-revealing thing. Absolute existence, nothing else is there. Absolute existence is Chit, consciousness. And that is bliss. And this is one single argument that runs through Advaita Vedanta.

Great sages like Shankaracharya and Madhwacharya, who came up respectively with Vishist Advaita and Dvaita, countered the above argument, and they said, Sat Chit Ananda are qualities of God. And Shankaracharya says, God is Sat Chit Ananda. These are technical things. We are going to study Mandukya Karika, pure Vedanta. Pure Vedanta, Advaita Vedanta may not be agreed by some. But that is very normal.

So, what is God in Vedanta? A pure mind, which has purified through various sadhanas, taken words from Guru, sees this conscious reality, pure conscious reality, sees form and qualities. That is, we can say Dvaita and Vishist Advait. When you are into deep meditation, to give a simple example, when Shri Ramakrishna was doing sadhana, he meditated on mother Kali. Then he had the intuitive experience of Mother Kali. Mother Kali had form and

qualities. Later when he Vedantic Sadhana, the form of Mother Kali went away. This is exactly what happens in Vedanta. So, Vedanta actually accepts both aspects (form & formless) of supreme reality, that is pure consciousness. It accepts the ultimate oneness, where there is no form, no qualities, there is pure Satchidananda. This is known as Nirguna Brahma; Nirguna, Nirakar. And the same supreme reality can appear to you with form and qualities. Vedanta accepts both. If you read Geeta with Shankara Commentaries, you can see how Geeta treats God as both with form and as formless. Vedanta accepts both. Some people have the wrong idea that Advaita Vedanta only accepts formless God. It is not so. Advaita Vedanta is Vedanta.

Swami Vivekananda, repeatedly says that Advaita takes complete picture. Others take part pictures. Advait Vedanta means Vedanta and as Swamiji said, Vedanta is religion. Advaita Vedanta applied in certain situations becomes Dvaita, applied in another situation becomes Vishista Advaita.

In that state when you have Nirvikalpa Samadhi, your mind becomes absolutely silent, something like you have in deep sleep, then you realise that the individual is one with the universal. Then you say Aham Brahmasmi, I am Brahman, I am the supreme reality, although this kind of realisation is reserved for a chosen few. We don't know how many such realizations take place in a century. Many may claim, but it is doubtful. In our own times, Shri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Ramana Maharshi are very famous for preaching Advaita Vedanta.

This God, or whatever other term may be used, is best represented by Aum. It is not Om. It is A U M. Later we will have a long discussion on Aum. In brief Whatever is there in this universe, whatever mental states are there, whatever physical states are there, are all represented by Aum. Swamiji says that every sect of Hinduism has to accept the Vedas and the Aum as the ultimate. Vedas are the sacred books and Aum is the sacred symbol of Satchidananda.

And then comes Atman, which is the ultimate in Vedanta. Let us talk a bit about how other philosophies see the soul. the Atman. Swamiji, while in the west often used the word Soul in place of Atman, to make them understand easily, as they had no idea about what Atman is. But there is a fundamental difference between Atman and Soul. What they call soul in the west, or what Islam calls Ruh, for Hindus it is JIvatman, the Atman which is identified with ignorance, which we will discuss later.

To the followers of Charbak, the materialist, the five elements (earth, water, fire, air & Space) are the ultimate reality. This is the way modern science has taken the approach or any materialist. They will say that the matter which is there is the ultimate reality. You are born of this, and you merge into it. There is nothing outside the world of the matter. Then there was Vaisheshika in orthodox philosophy. They say, there is Atman and it is a definite entity with

some powers of knowing and willing. God is there in Vaisheshika, but Atman has powers but limited. In the Mimansa school of thought, they say Atman is there, but it is a slave to Vaidic learning, Vedic Mantras. In Sankhya, Atman is there, but it is aloof. Like an elephant keeper, who rides an elephant, he is aloof. Yog says that it is some kind of vitality which controls through Prana. Buddhist school, talks about momentary consciousness. Then we have Naya school, which is related to Vaisheshika. They say Atman is separate from Matter and has limited power, just like Vaisheshika. When it comes to Vedanta, particularly Advaita Vedanta, Atman is supreme. Logically it is proved. We are not going by any Vedas or any books. That is the beauty of Acharya Shankar. He establishes Vedanta, purely through argument. And when we study Mandukya Karika, although it will mention Vedas here and there, but actually in its fourth chapter it demolishes every philosophy that one can think of and establishes Advaita and the supremacy of the Atman, through pure argument.

Actually, Advaita Vedanta is the ultimate reality as we see from the words of Shri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, and the author being from Ramakrishna Mission, to him words of Shri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda are the ultimate.

But the beauty of Shankaracharya is that he logically places Advaita Vedanta as the supreme. He uses scriptures, wherever needed, but he is not entirely dependent on that, the way other religions are dependent.

Now at microlevel, this ultimate reality which is Brahman is known as Atman, which is the conscious principal, living in every living being. Because Atman is Brahman, Atman is supreme, and no one can destroy Atman. As nothing can act on itself. Brahman cannot act on itself. God cannot act on itself. No one can destroy you; no one can destroy the true you. Your death is not your death, because you are Atman. Death is of the body, and not of the real you.

It is a very simple argument. My hand cannot hold the same hand. My eyes cannot see my own eyes. Nothing can act on Itself (Swakriya Abhab). Fire cannot burn fire. Atman cannot destroy Atman. Atman is Brahman. Brahman is Ishwar, the controlling entity. Even God cannot destroy Atman. That is what you are.

So, Atman has all the powers, all the purity, all the knowledge, and omnipresence, all pervading. But because of Maya, the divine ignorance, it thinks that its power is limited, its knowledge is limited and starts thinking that it is transmigratory, moves from body to body. All these will be discussed in detail in Mandukya Karika.

Now this Atman, which comes under the Divine illusion, i.e., Maya, is known as Jivatman. Normally when we say soul, it is the Jivatman. This is a very important concept. And that is why reality runs at two levels in Vedanta. One is the Supreme, where Atman is everything. The second is the relative, where Atman is identified with the bondage and is known as Jivatman, the transmigratory soul. This Jivatman is equivalent to the soul in Christianity and

Islam etc.

Now what is this bondage? The technical term for it is Maya, also known as Avidya and Prakriti.

Maya is a statement of fact. It exists. Everyone knows it. There is a famous proverb in Hindi, Hath kangan ko aarsi kiya? Meaning, if you have worn a bracelet in your arm, you don't need a mirror to see that. We all suffer in life and yet we hope that things will improve for us. If you go by the comparisons from Quantum physics, it is like Schrödinger's cat. It exists and it does not exist. It is like a double slit experiment in Physics, where subatomic particles like electrons or photons act both as matter and energy. You don't know what is what. Depending on how you want to see, you have to fix your experiment.

If you want to know the property of an electron, say mass, you have to set the experiment in a particular way, and if you want to know its velocity, you have to set your experiments differently. You cannot know both. If you want both mass and velocity of an electron you cannot.

Similarly, you cannot know the Brahman and the world simultaneously. Either you know the world or you know God. You cannot know both. You have to fix your experiment based on what you want to see. That instrument is your mind. This setting up of the mind is Maya. But this Maya is false. Because if you want, you can turn your wisdom, turn your intelligence towards God. As you are not bound permanently, this Maya is not real. Maya is not real, yet it appears as real, this is the beauty of Maya. You may wonder what kind of explanation is this. This is similar to darkness. You cannot see darkness with the help of darkness, and if you bring in light, darkness does not exist. Maya is similar. If you want to know what Maya is, you can never know it while staying in Maya. The moment you gain knowledge of Maya, Maya is not there. So, you cannot say what Maya is. Acharya Shankar beautifully explains, one who has Maya, has Maya. And that is it. It is a statement of fact.

In other philosophies, Dvaita and Vishishtadvaita attack Advaita at this point. Because this bondage, this maya is a subjective thing. You cannot argue on this. In Advaita Vedanta, if bondage is real, then freedom of the soul is not possible. Because that bondage will come again. Only if the bondage is unreal, then all the words that have spoken in the scriptures, that is freedom, absolute freedom, can be true. We will be elaborating these things as we continue.

Coming to Sadhana, the most popular sadhana in Vedanta is thinking of who truly you are; Aham Brahmasmi. Think of it day and night, think of it all the time. When one becomes free of all the coverings that are there, then, one becomes what one is. Sadhana is all about being, not about becoming. You don't become a good person, because you are already good. You don't become a spiritual person, because you are already spiritual. The example used in Vedanta is of Sandalwood and of Aguru, which if they remain in water for a long

time, they acquire a foul smell. Rub them properly, and the foul smell goes away. Sadhana is all about rubbing off the wrong things.

Once you do all the Sadhana, you get established in non-dual knowledge. Non-dual knowledge does not mean knowledge of one. People very often make this mistake. Nowadays with all the popular talks of Advaita Vedanta, people think Advait means one. Advait does not mean one. Advait is beyond one and two. Advait is beyond zero and one. Once Shri Ramkrishna, asked Narendranath, later Swami Vivekananda, to think of ten pots of water reflecting the Sun. Shri Ramkrishna asks, how many Sun are there? Ten here and one in the sky. Now you break one after another and there is one pot. How many Suns are there? Two. Break that pot. How many are there? Narendranath says one. Shri Ramakrishna says, no. You cannot say how many are there. This is Advaita. When I read the Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna, I could not understand for years. We have day and night. The way you cannot think of day and night, staying in the Sun, we understand Day and night because we are on the earth because there are dualities. When there is no duality, how can you say that there is only day when you stay in the Sun? Because if you say day, you presuppose that there is night. When you are established that you alone exist, you realise that everything in this universe has come out of you. There is no birth for you, no death for you. There is no ignorance for you, no knowledge for you. More importantly these things were never there for you. There is no joy, there is no misery. There is no virtue, there is no vice. Because there is only one. To have virtue, to have vice, you need two. When we say one, we mean pure existence which we discussed earlier. Then Acharya Shankar says that, ultimately, existence alone remains. Now, very interestingly, Vedanta focuses on gaining this knowledge while you are alive.

We don't talk of going to heaven after death. Those who want to do that, it is OK with them but not for us. Geeta beautifully says "*Ihaiva tair jitaḥ sargo..*".*,* (Ref Geeta, chapter 5, verse 19) you need to gain this wisdom and consequently conquer the universe here and now. Vedanta is the philosophy of here and now.

This is a very brief overview of Vedanta.

But why Vedanta?

Vedanta can be a life changing experience. Even a theoretical understanding of Vedanta can be life changing, as it is not speculation. Just think of it, when Hegel came up with his dialectic materialism, it was taken up by many scientists and many thinkers. But Communists came out of it. Good or bad, Communists were ruling more than half of the world at one time. Because they felt that it is a philosophy that can be applied to life.

Vedanta is not a philosophy that can be applied to life, but is meant for application in life. When we go through Upanishads and Geeta, we find they are talking of getting out of sorrow and misery etc.

What is very shocking, painful and surprising, is that such a powerful philosophy was never applied in life. And this wonderful and amazing wisdom of Vedanta, had to wait till Swami Vivekananda came on the scene and showed how Vedanta can be applied in daily life. When you go through his words, essentially, Swamiji is talking of practical application of Vedanta in daily life.

We placed all the argumentsṭo show that Vedanta is true, and we mentioned sages since ancient times, down to Swami Vivekananda, have been talking about, Vedanta as the ultimate truth. That means you are the ultimate truth, beyond all duality. So, you have to aspire for freedom, all the time. If you practice Vedanta, you will aspire for freedom, at all the levels, all the time. Because you are a Vedanti.

If you say that God loves you, as Christians popularly say Jesus loves you. If Jesus loves you, Jesus will take care of you. Your outlook is of a different kind. When you say that, I am pure Atman, under the illusion of bondage, then I need to get out of this bondage and be free at every stage all the time.

Naturally, you will have respect for yourself all the time, because you are supreme. So, you can never, under no condition have atma-glani i.e., disrespect yourself. You are Atman, Atman is Brahman and Brahman is Ishwar. This is the highest respect for yourself. Whatever has to be attained, must be done here and now. You cannot afford to wait for death to take you somewhere. Heaven and hell, these are not your ultimate destination. Because heaven and hell also belong to the world of duality. But you belong to the realm of absolute, non-dual. Heaven and hell are not meant for you. Whatever the religions may talk about heaven and hell, they are not meant for you.

You have nothing to attain externally, because you already have all the power, already all the knowledge. So, you will be at peace. We are continuously disturbed by we have to attain this; we have to attain that. No. Just be. You don't have to become. Just be. You will be at peace.

There is no external power to control you. Not even God can destroy you. So, you become free of fear, free of pain, free of sorrow. These are the practical applications of Vedanta. They say Jesus loves you so you don't need to worry. No! How do you know that Jesus loves you? And Jesus loves only Christians. There itself is exclusion. If Jesus loves only Christians, it is an exclusion. And according to Acharya Shankar, every exclusion is Maya. It is not reality. Persistence is the test of reality.

And you cannot blame others for your pain, for your suffering, because you alone exist. It is a fact. You alone are responsible for all that happens. So, this gives you strength. The thought that one else is responsible, is what gives you strength. And all power and all knowledge are within you. Wake them up. You may feel that.

When one practices Vedant, outlook changes. You have to respect all., because they are

you, your form. So, you have to respect everyone. You have to respect even the murderers and the molesters. They need to be punished, because, if there is a wound on your arms, you apply medicine. Punishment is by way of medicine. To whom? They are you, not different. Remember, those who do not believe in Vedanta, will not go to any hell, as all other religions say, if you don't accept, you will go to hell. But others are not going to hell. So, there is universal acceptance. And you cannot harm, belittle, or intrude on others. Because there are no "others". All are you. Because there is no other, it is only you. The way you cannot injure yourself, you cannot injure others. You have to take everyone along in this path. Because they are all you only.

Imagine the outlook, the philosophy, the grandness of this. Just try to feel this simple truth that you are Divine. Divine cannot be two. Divine has to be one. You alone exist as Atman. Others are also you, as all are Atman, Divine. So that is Vedanta in a nutshell.

2. Mandukya Upanishad – The Genesis

We have already discussed Vedanta to prepare ourselves to learn Mandukya Upanishad. Before we proceed to learn Mandukya Upanishad, we need to know the Genesis of Mandukya Upanishad; from where it has come, how it was created, how it became popular, what is its importance etc. Slowly we shall be entering the main Upanishad and its explanatory verses.

The most sacred scripture of the Hindus are the four Vedas, known as Rig Veda, Sam Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda.

The contents of the four Vedas are almost the same. In fact, nearly all the verses of Sam Veda are taken from Rig Veda. Many mantras of Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda, come from Rig Veda. The mantras were nearly the same but the purpose was different.

Those of you who are more interested to know about Vedas, may listen to our talks you may hear our talk on Hinduism; The first talk is why Hinduism and the second talk is The Vedas. And we have a few other talks that elaborate the mantras and some hymns of the Vedas.

We don't know much about where the ancient Hindu people lived. Most likely they lived on the banks of River Indus or Sindhu and River Saraswati . But in the Vedas we find references to rivers Ganga and Yamuna also in addition to Sindhu and Saraswati. So, it is very difficult to stay where the Hindus stayed in Vedic Times. It is best to leave these matters to the Historians and Archeologists.

Unfortunately, initially the history was written by the British. They belittled us thoroughly. As a result, even today, a lot of things that we read about Hinduism and Vedas etc., are pretty derogatory. After Independence, History went into the hands of so-called liberals, who were

actually Marxists. Historians like Romila Thapar, Irfan Habib seemed to be hell bent on proving that Hindus have done a lot of wrong things, as if Hindus are the only people who have done wrong things. They also wanted to place things much nearer to our own times. We don't know who is correct. But when one writes History, one should never ignore traditional beliefs and traditional wisdom. When there is no access to recorded history, it is good to depend on the traditions. But these historians had a very clear purpose. They want to see class struggle and clash in everything and so History is distorted. For whatever reasons, these studies were in the hands of these learned people and they were no doubt learned.

The people who actually knew the Veda, did not know English well, and their translations and interpretations they did are at best pathetic. So, things are not in very good shape and in very good hands. Maybe tomorrow things may improve.

But if you give even a cursory glance at the Vedas, you will see that there is no class struggle, there is no desire of one to overpower others. And the words have been hopelessly and terribly misinterpreted. It is very painful. For example, Vedas are talking about praising Lord Vishnu and says that one who is devoted to Lord Vishnu, will go to the sphere of Lord Vishnu, which is well lit. It is a very common concept in every religion that your heaven is well lit. These scholars have translated that one will go to a land where there are cows and with huge horns. The traditional commentators have very clearly said the meaning of the verses. But when the purpose is to make someone feel degraded, this is what these scholars do.

The ancient Hindu race (Swami Vivekananda says that they lived at least eight to ten thousand years ago) believed in Yajnas, and performed sacrifices. And Vedas were used in these Yajnas.

Rig Veda was used to chant the mantras as prayers. Yajur Veda, was used to pour the oblations, Sam Veda was used for some special sacrifices, and Atharva Veda did not have any direct relation with the Yajnas, but the priests who knew Atharva Veda, used to be the superintendent of the sacrifices. As has been mentioned earlier, as far as the contents are concerned, the four Vedas are similar.

Each of these Vedas has four sections, the first one is usually known as Sangeeta, where we have the main mantras which were used in the Yajnas. The second portion was known as Brahman, which were the descriptions of the ways of performing the Yajnas. The third portion is Aranyak, used for contemplation and the last one Upanishad. Here we are discussing Mandukya Upanishad.

However, these four divisions were not watertight compartments. For example, Ishopanishad or Ishavasya Upanishad, comes immediately after Sangeeta. Normally it should come after Aranyak. So, there is no hard and fast rule. Mandukya Upanishad, comes in Atharva Veda,

in the Brahman portion. Normally, it should come after the Aranyak as fourth, but it comes within the second.

So, the question is how do we know that this is an Upanishad. Shankaracharya says that the sections that deal exclusively with matters concerning the Atman, the soul, are Upanishads. But that is a definition given by Shankaracharya much later. Traditionally, much before Shankaracharya came, these divisions were made and the learned one, wise ones, defined which one is a Upanishad, maybe three or four thousand years ago. Traditionally it has been going on. Shankaracharya just gave his stamp of approval through arguments.

In this Mandukya Upanishad, which comes in Atharva Veda, in the Brahman portion, there are only twelve mantras. It is the shortest Upanishad. Ishavasya Upanishad has eighteen. Generally, Upanishads have around hundred mantras.

The verses of the Upanishads and the Vedas are called Mantras and not shlokas. This is a special respect shown to Upanishads and the Vedas. Mantra here does not mean something secret. Mantras are sacred. Whenever we mention the word Mantra, in the context of Upanishads, it means that they are either from Upanishads or Vedas.

In these twelve mantras of Mandukya Upanishad, the discussion is on AUM. We have discussed AUM in our other talks in the Indian Spiritual Heritage channel. Aum has been explained in Hindi, Bengali & English. One can find it in the playlist.

But in Mandukya Upanishad, these discussions go to a mind-boggling depth and detail. And we will see how Mandukya Upanishad presents AUM as being the substratum of all states. All the states of time (past present and future) are AUM. All awareness states, the waking state, dream state and dreamless state are AUM. Then there are states of Consciousness and aspects of Knowledge. Everything is AUM. These twelve mantras of Mandukya Upanishad, essentially discuss the nature of reality as AUM.

Atman is AUM, Brahman is AUM. We will discuss all these and so let us wait for further discussion. If you need a very short explanation you can read our previous chapter on Vedanta.

Now these twelve mantras were good enough and they were from ancient sages of the time of Upanishads. India is a land, where sages have been in abundance. No land and no religion ever had such a huge succession and abundance of sages as India had and continues to have.

Then there came Gaudapada. Gaudapada was a highly respected philosopher and saint. He happened to be the teacher of Govindapada, who again was the teacher of the great Shankaracharya, Adi Shankara. The moment we think of Vedanta we think of Shankaracharya. But we don't know much about Gaudapada.

At Omkareshwar, near Indore, there is a cave where Govindapada used to sit. There is a story that Shankaracharya went to learn from him. But Govindapada was lost in meditation.

And there were many aspirants who wanted to learn from him. But his meditation was not breaking. When Shankaracharya went, river Narmada was in spate as it was monsoon. Flood water was rising and the cave was at risk of getting submerged. Shankaracharya spontaneously composed his Stotra on Narmada and he put his Kamandalu, (the water pot) in Narmad and took the water in that pot and the water receded. Nowadays due to the dam, the water does not rise that much. But even then, we can imagine that the cave could get submerged if water rises. We know this much about Govindapada, that he taught and meditated.

Some people say that Gaudapada was from Bengal (Bengal was called Gauda Desh), but Bengal does not have a strong Vedanta tradition. So, we really do not know.

The real credit and merit of Gaudapada lies in the fact that, after the Upanishadic sages, he is practically the first one, who presents Vedanta so well.

Vyasa was there of course, but he was more of a compiler. So, we have all these great sages, who gave us Ishopanishad, Kena Upanishad, Kathopanishad, Mundaka Upanishad, and we come across great names in Chandogya Upanishad and Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, sages like Yajnavalka and all. And then suddenly the tradition of names vanishes. We do come across some names in Mahabharata, but at best they are frugal. And then comes Gaudapada who is as historical as a person can be for his work. He wrote an explanatory treatise or the Karika on this Mandukya Upanishad, in two hundred and fifteen verses. As said earlier Mandukya Upanishad has only twelve verses.

There is a difference between mantras and slokas. Twelve Upanishad verses are mantras, two hundred fifteen verses of the Karika are slokas. Karika actually means explanatory commentary. Commentaries come under various names, e.g., Bhashya. Sometimes they are known as Tika. Again, Tika is very simple but Bhashya normally means, when one is trying to prove a particular philosophy e.g., Shankaracharya's commentary, Ramanuja's commentary etc. Tika is when you present a simple meaning. There are different words like varttikas. Karika is actually an explanatory commentary in Verses.

The importance of this Karika is that it laid the foundation of Vedanta, particularly Advaita Vedanta, in a systematic way. And Vedanta has never looked back after that. As we shall see, when we are talking of the scriptures, when we are talking about the Vedas, and when we are talking about the Upanishads, they present many ideas. For example, those of you who are into Shri Ramakrishna Literature, will see that in the Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna (Ramakrishna Kathamrita in Bengali) so many ideas are scattered. When you take up one particular idea, for example devotion, i.e, Bhakti, and do that work on Bhakti, you call it a treatise. Scriptures are never treatise. Scriptures describe the infinite. So, every scripture will have infinite facets. And when you start working on a particular philosophy, particular philosophy of that scripture, it becomes a Treatise. Normally they are known as Prakarana

Grantha. Prakaran focused on a particular aspect of the scripture or a philosophy. There is a difference between shastra and prakarana. Here in this Indian heritage channel, we try to focus more on the scriptures.

Gaudapada extensively used arguments in his Karika. In scriptures you don't have arguments. We believe that when a sage or a great mind goes into the depths of silence and from there to contemplation, to stillness of mind, and finally when there is a complete stillness of mind, that person comes face to face with certain fundamental truths of life. What are those fundamental truths of life? They concern God and creation. The beautiful term is Jeev, Jagat, Ishwar. Jeev is soul, Jagat is world and Ishwar is God. Then depending on what spiritual realisation they had, they just passed on. If you read the Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna, that is what you see. But when you are trying to place these ideas before a common man, you need to use metaphors and arguments.

Gaudapada uses arguments extensively, and most of his arguments in a nutshell discuss Buddhist philosophers like Ashwaghosh and Nagarjuna and Vasubandhu. He takes up philosophies like Shunyavad, Kshanik Vijnanvad and shows how they contradict each other and discards.

So, it is very obvious that Gaudapada's time was probably after these philosophers. Actually, it fits. If Shankaracharya belonged to the eighth century, then Gaudapada should belong to the fifth-sixth century.

(Recently there has been a court case in Allahabad where one gentleman (Author knows him personally), an archaeologist, has tried to prove that Acharya Shankar is contemporary of Lord Buddha or may be elder. Now the author cannot prove or disprove him. But the Allahabad court has given a verdict in his favour. And he wants to go to the Supreme court to prove that Shankaracharya was a contemporary of Bhagwan Buddha. In that case Gaudapada Karika will be in very serious trouble as it uses a lot of arguments of the Buddhist philosophers. And tradition says Gaudapada was the teacher of Acharya Shankar. Anyway they are scholars and this author is an ordinary student of Vedanta and the little that he understands, he is sharing. He does not have the authority to prove or disprove this.)

Mandukya Karika has four sections. The first one is called Agam Prakarana. Prakarana means Treatise. It has just twenty-nine verses there it tries to demolish the popular concepts concerning God, Universe, creation etc. And the general quotation it uses is from the scriptures. Agam actually means scriptures.

The second section is called Vaitathya Prakarana. It has thirty-eight verses and there it describes the illusory nature of sense experience. Because whatever we are seeing in this universe, comes to us from our senses and it shows how all these are actually illusory.

And then comes Advaita Prakarana. It has forty-eight verses. Gaudapada very clearly says what Advaita is. It is a very important section. If you want to understand Vedanta, if you want

to understand Advaita, it is a very important section.
And then comes Alata Shanti Prakaran. Alata Shanti literally means, suppose as if you take a fire stick and revolve it very fast, the whole thing will appear to you like a ring of fire. When you want to stop it, you need to make this ring of fire disappear. For that you need to stop moving that stick. This stick is known as Alata, which creates this ring of fire.
When Bhagavan Buddha talked about Nirvana, he was talking about the same thing; that one body is giving birth to the next. This cycle of birth and death has to stop. This is what Gaudapada also proves. However, in this last section which has one hundred verses he takes up different schools of philosophies and shows how they are contradicting each other. So essentially Gaudapada uses the arguments of Buddhists and refutes them. However, when he was talking about Alata Shanti and all, many people took him to be a Buddhist.
The bane of scholarship all over the world is that they are an extremely jealous band. They cannot often tolerate opinions differing from their own. We may find it shocking but it happens. The opposite opinion may be silenced by jail or even murder. History of science has such examples. An example of Pythagoras is there. The credit of murdering the opposition, does not belong to a particular religion, even the scientists have done it.
So, the Hindu religious people were shocked by this presentation of Gaudapada, which appeared to them as audacious. That they could not contradict him, so branded him as Prachchhanna Bouddha, a Buddhist in disguise. Buddhism was extremely looked down upon in India. Yet Buddha is treated as an Avatar, an incarnation of God. Now in the case of Buddha, someone who was anti-Veda, how can you take him as an incarnation of God? But the spiritual eminence of Buddhism could not be questioned. The saner minds realised that Lord Buddha had super eminence as far as spirituality is concerned and considered him as an Avatar (Incarnation).
The interesting funny story is that, in earlier times there used to be gods (devatas), and demons and fighting was there. And the gods used to be defeated. And so, the great God used to incarnate in various forms and take side of the gods to defeat the demons. So, how to make Buddha an incarnation? So, they came up with a brilliant idea. That all the asuras of the ancient times, they were so badly beaten up by the gods and God, that they were reborn as human beings, and they could not be recognised and they were mingling in human society. So, Lord Vishnu incarnated as Buddha, and taught them a false philosophy, and took them away from Hinduism towards destruction. Now these things should be taken only as humour. It was thought that Buddha preached false religion because he very strongly objected to the sacrificial nature of the Vedas and certain beliefs that one needed to have to practice Vedic religion. This story should at best be taken as a joke.
Anyone who criticises the Vedas, cannot be accepted as respectable by the Hindus. It is only when Shri Ramakrishna came and Swami Vivekananda came, that the Hindu people,

for example at Ramakrishna Mission, we worship Lord Buddha as the Master. We don't worry much about whether or not he went against the Vedas. Because a lot of time has passed and time heals.

Now Gaudapada, as we shall see, in his philosophy, he demolishes everything. And one caution, is that this Mandukya Karika, can be extremely disturbing. Not Mandukya Upanishad. So please continue reading, only if you have a very powerful resolve. This book is not meant for the faint hearted, not meant for weaklings. So please be very careful. Everything will be demolished. Unlike Buddhism, where everything becomes Shunya, Gaudapada says that you alone exist, Atman alone exists.

Actually, he was not a Buddhist, as his critics came out, as I said that Scholarly people can be extremely vicious and venomous, so they called him a Buddhist in disguise. The sheer vastness of the knowledge that Gaudapada had, was simply phenomenal. And the flight of thoughts leaves you awestruck.

Well, with these words, I welcome you all to the most profound work on Advaita Vedanta. There is no other work, which is as profound as Mandukya Upanishad with Karika. Once again, I remind you that it is extremely difficult work and it can be extremely disturbing for people who love to hold on to certain beliefs.

Personally, Mandukya Karika has been very fascinating for me. When I was a young monk and a mere novice, we were being taught by Shrimat Swami Smarananandaji Maharaj, who later became the President of Ramakrishna Mission. He used to take two classes every week on Jnana Yog of Swami Vivekananda. And there to explain some point he mentioned Mandukya Karika. That is when I first heard consciously about Mandukya Karika.

In Ramakrishna Mission you have to stay for nine years as brahmachari in white clothes. During that period, for two years, you have to stay at the Headquarters at the Belur Math, living a life of studies and contemplation etc at the training centre.

So, when I was in the training centre, one of my friends, who knew Maharaj well, told me that Smrananandaji Maharaj is a great scholar of Mandukya Karika. And he has memorised the whole of Mandukya Karika. That was very fascinating for me. Because I knew of Monks who knew Geeta by heart, seven hundred verses. Compared to that two hundred fifteen is not much. Even then I found it very interesting that here was this great monk who knew whole of Mandukya Karika by heart. So, I started after this to memorise Mandukya Karika next year and I think the first part may be 30/35 verses. After that I didn't do it. And then, as luck would have, in the second year, I had Acharya Shrimat Swami Mokshadanandaji Maharaj, and later I learnt so much from him. Most of my learning was actually from him and he was teaching us Mandukya Karika. Normally we used to have books from the library, but I had been so fascinated by Mandukya Karika that I asked for five rupees or so, from (It was in 1986, when 5 rupees was a big amount) some monk and had one copy purchased from

Geeta Press, in Sanskrit and Hindi. And I would take notes. To be very honest, I did not understand practically anything about it. And Mokshadanandaji Maharaj, (Ram Maharaj), was teaching us. And I felt truly fascinated. And whenever I got a chance in my life later, I used to go through that copy and sometimes I used to wonder, what note I have taken here! Maharaj used to say and I used to note down, just without understanding. Then as the understanding grew, I was fascinated that I had taken down such notes. So that is the background story of Mandukya Upanishad and Mandukya Karika.

Now here, we begin with Mangalacharan. Mangalacharan is normally whenever a work was written, these sages and poets used to compose some prayer, some invocation. And they could be long, they could be short, they could be dedicated to some God, or to their Guru. Those who are familiar with Ram Charita Manas, would know that Tulsidas wrote a very long Mangalacharan, and it is beautiful.

Shankaracharya was a great poet, and sometimes, not always, he used to write a Mangalacharan. Some introductory verses. In his commentary on Geeta, he uses verses from Puranas. But here he has composed one.

Invocation is here

प्रज्ञानान्शुप्रतानैः स्थिरचर्निकरव्यापिभिव्यरप्य लोकान्।

भुक्तवा भोगान्स्थ्वष्ठान्पुनर्पि धिषणोद्भासितान्कामजन्यान्॥

पीत्वा सवरन्विशेषन् स्व्पति मधुरभुन्ग्मायया भोजयन्नो।

मायासंख्यातुरीयं परममृतमजं ब्रह्म यत्तन्नतोऽस्मि॥

यो विसवात्मा विधिजवीजयन प्राशय भोगाणस्थविष्ठान

पश्चाचचान्यानस्यमतिवि भवान ज्योतिषा स्वेन सूक्ष्मान॥

सर्वानेतानपुनरपि शनैः स्वात्मनि स्थापयित्वा

हित्वा सर्वान्विशेन्विगतगुणगणः नस्तुरीयः॥

Translation by Swami Nikhilananda

I bow to that Brahman that (during the waking state) after having enjoyed (experienced) all gross objects by pervading the entire universe through the omnipresent rays of its immutable consciousness that embraces the entire variety of the movable and the immovable objects; that again, after having digested, as it were,—that is to say, experienced within (in the dream state)—all the variety of objects produced by desires and brought into existence by the mind, enjoys bliss in deep sleep and makes us experience through *Māyā,* the bliss; which, further, is designated, in terms of *Māyā*, as the fourth (*Turīya*), and which is supreme, immortal and changeless.

May that *Turīya* that, (through *Māyā*) having identified itself as the entire universe, experiences (in the waking state) the manifold gross objects of enjoyment through ignorance and attachment, that again during the dream state, experiences, being enlightened by its own light, the subtle objects of enjoyment, the objects that are brought into existence by its own internal organ, and which, lastly, in dreamless sleep withdraws all objects (subtle as well as gross) within itself and thus becomes free from all distinctions and differences,—(May this *Turīya* that) is ever devoid of all attributes, protect us.

This is Vedanta in Full flow.
How do we experience an object? We experience it by covering it with our own consciousness. Brahman experiences the objects in the waking state. It is not through the physical light as Physics would make us understand, through the reflection and refraction of physical light on the objects. With physical light sensations come to us. But knowledge itself, knowing, the act of knowing, takes place through consciousness covering that object.
We will be discussing more and more of this. Those of you who are more interested in this may listen to our talks on Swamiji's inspired talks. Swamiji repeatedly talks about these ideas.
We know an object when our consciousness covers it. The objects can be movable or immovable (Sthabar & Jangam, Immovable and movable respectively). In our dream state, the object is produced by desire. Desire itself is a very wide term. It is the mind that produces, in the light of mind, because no other light is present, and which again in deep sleep absorbs the various particulars of the object.
In the waking state, when we see an object there are certain particulars attached to it. In the dream state, when the mind creates that object, that state has certain particulars. During deep sleep, all these particulars are dissolved.
In our discussion of Advaita Vedanta, we have shown that the consciousness associated with any object has two aspects. The idea of presence, the idea of is-ness and the idea of the object. Even if the object goes away, is-ness, that is the presence continues. It goes for a particular object but continues for some other object. That means particulars go away. And real existence continues under all conditions.
There we described how existence is a must for awareness. Without existence you cannot have awareness, even for imaginary objects. Things that you imagine, it has to have an existence, although imaginary existence. And you enjoy what you are aware of, there being only existence, that existence is awareness, and that awareness is bliss. When the particulars are gone, what remains is pure bliss. So, Acharya Shankar says, that in deep sleep, particulars are absorbed. What remains is pure bliss. And makes us also experience. That is the beauty of it. It becomes bliss, and it enjoys bliss.
Also experience this maya through the same bliss. Acharya Shankar says, I bow to this supreme immortal and birthless Brahman designated in terms of Maya as Turiya the fourth. This Brahman which appears as objects, and learns about the objects by spreading its consciousness, that very Brahman appears to us without particulars and what Brahman experiences is known as Turiya, the fourth state. When we begin this Upanishad, we will discuss these three, Jagrat, Swapna and Susupti and Turiya. Waking, Dream, Dreamless and the fourth, Turiya.

In this first shloka, that Acharya composed, there he is making Pranam to Brahman, which is Turiya which appears as Atman in three states of waking dream and sleepless. You might wonder what Turiya has to do with this. Once we begin with the main Upanishad, the idea will be clear. Naturally we cannot expect to understand everything in one day. That ultimate existence, ultimate bliss appears to us in three stages, in three states. The fourth one, the Turiya, is not really a state but it is the fullness of all the three into one. . It is something like a one-rupee coin with four parts, each 25 paise. The fourth part, completes the coin to be a full one rupee. So, it is not like four legs of a table or four legs of a cow, which are all separate. Here it says, may Turiya which as the world soul, (this second sloka is about the universal and the first sloka is about the individual.), this universal soul, experiences in the waking state, gross objects, good and evil, from the cosmic level. Now Brahman also experiences at the cosmic level which again experiences in the dream state other and subtle objects produced by its own mind and illumined by its own light. Lastly in dreamless sleep, withdraws all objects and remains devoid of distinction. And Acharya says, may the attribute less Turiya protect us. So, Turiya is the ultimate thing. Here the term used is not Brahman, not Atman, not God. In the first shloka it is waking dream and dreamless. Here God is coming in three different aspects. The first one is known as Virat (sum total of gross bodies), the second is Hiranyagarbha (which is the sum total of subtle bodies), the third is Ishwara (which is sum total of causal bodies, Sthula, Suksma and Karan). We will be discussing more of this Mandukya Upanishad. We shall be discussing the three states, waking, dream and dreamless. It is a very fascinating subject.

Imagine Mandukya Upanishad was composed at least 3000-3500 years ago and it belongs to the Brahman part of Atharva Veda, which may be 5000 years ago. Just Imagine the level of the thoughts of our ancient Rishis.

Chapter 1

Mandukya Karika - Agama Prakarana

3. AUM is everything

In the previous chapters we had a very short, brief overview of what Vedanta is and what Mandukya Upanishad is about. Now we enter the main Upanishad. And whatever I discuss will be based on How Acharya Shankar has interpreted both the Upanishad and also the Karika.

Here I would like to draw your attention to the fact that, we are not presenting a simplistic idea of Mandukya Upanishad. A simplistic idea means we just give an overview of the whole thing in two or three chapters.

Mandukya Karika is a very profound work. So much so, that not only the monks of Ramakrishna Mission, but also the monks of other Ashrams, take great pride in mentioning that they are studying Mandukya Karika. And even if you meet a monk, twelve years after his first telling that he is studying Mandukya Karika, he would not miss telling you about studying Mandukya Karika. Such is the prestige and glamour associated with this work. This is the most profound Vedanta work.

So, no use making things simple and at the same time, I will not keep it complicated. I will try to make it as easy to grasp as possible. Just one request to dear readers, in case you find some idea difficult to grasp, please read from the beginning again. Everything will be clear. Or, we have this email id, ishrkm@gmail.com, you may send a question. But that question must be strictly based on what we have discussed. Don't go on moving here and there.

Acharya Shankar begins his introduction, the technical term for which is Sambandha Bhashya.

Sambandha Bhashya discusses four very important aspects of a book which the author must discuss.

First, discussion will be on "Adhikari". That is who this book is meant for, who is competent or eligible to read the book.

When you go to a bookstore, and you pick up a book, and then sometimes you ask the bookseller, what is this book about, for whom it is written? You might have seen most books contain writing on the back cover, it is known as blurb, it is a technical term in the publishing world. There it describes what the book is about, indirectly it also says for whom this book is meant. So Adhikari is the first thing that has to be discussed.

And then comes Vishay, which discusses the subject matter of the book.

The third is “Prayojan”; explaining why we need this book. And lastly Sambandha, describing the relationship between the book and the subject matter. These four are called Sadhan Chatustaya.

Nowadays we surprisingly find that some authors are not very clear about,for whom the book is written. Not all authors but some.

But whenever a great commentator takes up a book to explain, he would always take up these four things. For whom the book is meant, what is the subject matter, what is the benefit, how do I get the benefit and lastly how is the subject matter related to this book. This keeps the author on the right track while writing the book. It is sometimes seen that the author loses track. He says one subject matter and discusses something else. For example, one says the book is on Vedanta but goes on talking about Vedantic stories.

Now we had mentioned certain things in the previous chapters, which we need to explain once again. Essentially, we say this book is Mandukya Karika, although we say Mandukya Upanishad with Karika. Because Mandukya Upanishad has only twelve mantras. So, it is not voluminous. It is a very thin book. Twelve mantras are thirteen or fourteen sentences. Not more than that. The importance of this work is because of its Karika. Karika as we had mentioned, is a commentary in verse form, written by Gaudapada who was the teacher of Govindapada, who was Shankaracharya's teacher. Please note that when I say Acharya, I mean Acharya Shankar, Shankaracharya. He says that, this is a prakarana grantha. There is a difference between a shastra and a prakarana grantha, as mentioned previously. Scripture (Shastra) is a general treatise on spirituality. It may discuss many things. If you take any of the scripture, for example if you take up the Vedas, the most interesting, they just go meandering in the spiritual world. Moving freely. When you think of some valley, you see some views, while moving freely, just enjoying, you may come across many things, many gems. It is different from serendipity (there is another English term. Serendipity is when you are walking and discover something). The scriptures are more like moving freely in a treasure house. As if a powerful and rich king has allowed you to enter his treasure house to just move around. One treasure has some speciality, another has some other speciality. The Upanishads are like that. Geeta is like that. But Prakarana Grantha takes up one aspect, and focuses entirely on that. For example, we have this Viveka Chudamani, we have Dig Drishya Vivek, or we have so many other works on Advaita. Not only Advaita, Prakaran Grantha are available for every tradition. So, Acharya Shankara says that this Karika is a prakarana Grantha, and this also needs to have these four. And these four,must be discussed.

For whom this book is meant – he says that it is the same as Vedanta, whosoever studies Vedanta, can study this work and who can study Vedanta? Vedanta is not meant for everyone. Mind it! Vedanta is meant, I mean in Shankaracharya’s time, in short, for those who make Vedanta their way of life.

Nowadays we study more out of curiosity and because certain glamour is associated with this partly because of Swami Vivekananda and partly because of Ramana Maharshi. Sometimes I find my dear viewer mentioning in comments that they are not able to understand this or that. This is because you have not made that a way of life. If you make it your way of life, you will understand it. When you study a subject out of idle curiosity, you may or may not understand. Certain things you will understand and certain things you will not. But when it is your way of life, do or die situation, you will definitely understand. So, for whom is Vedant meant? Big question. It is meant for one who wants to get out of this phenomenal existence. Phenomenal existence is where the duality reigns supreme. Things like Birth and death, happiness and misery, joy and suffering, virtue and vice, reign supreme in the phenomenal existence. One moment you are like this, another moment you are like something else. You are fed up. You say I don't want all this. Or as Lord Buddha had famously said "Sarvam Dukham". Everything is misery. We need to get out of this.
Vedant does not talk about misery. It says that happiness is as severe a bondage as miseries. Happiness and misery both are bondages in Vedanta. More specifically they use the term many of you might have heard, those of your bit interested in Vedanta, statements like Aham Brahmasmi, and Tatvamasi. Aham Brahmasmi means I am Brahman, and Tat Tvam Asi means
you are that. Anyone who is interested in knowing, who truly one is, will try to know the real meaning of Tat Tvam Asi and the real meaning of Tat and real meaning of Tvam, real meaning of you and real meaning of that.
As Ramana Maharshi used to say, who am I? who am I? I am Atman. This Atman, the true Atman, your true Atman and my true Atman is not different from that. What is that? Brahman. Brahman without any qualities, without any attribute without any covering, is same as me. Pure water is pure water. But the moment you say huge mass of water, you have put a quality, it becomes ocean. Salts added to water become ocean water and take that water and put it in glass, put sugar and lemon. It becomes sharbat. Sharbat is entirely different from ocean water. And yet in essence they are one and the same. Take away the glass, take away sugar, lemon, take away saltiness, take away hugeness, they are the same, water. These examples are very simple to understand. But when we try to understand the spiritual implications of these, it becomes huge, simply huge. And from there comes the question, why do we need it? Do we need these scriptures? Because, very often Vedanta will say that it is self-evident, but scriptures are needed. What exactly do they do? What does Mandukya Upanishad do? What does Geeta do? What does Kathoponishad do? For that matter what do any of these Vedanta books do?
Now we cannot enter any of the other religions because, scriptures of other religions behave differently.

Vedanta is entirely different work. Vedanta is class apart. Just class apart. It is the crown jewel of religious scriptures. It is the greatest gift of God to Humanity. It is the greatest gift from India to the world. It is the greatest gift of Hindu religion to the world. It is a different thing that we ourselves do not understand Vedanta. It is a different thing that the world is not yet able to appreciate Vedanta. How does it matter? When Einstein gave the equation $E=mc^2$, he did not know that the Atomic Bomb could be made out of it. And he definitely did not know that the idea of expanding universe, the ideas of Black Hole etc would come out of that equation. And when he was told by different scientists, he would get annoyed. Those who are well aware of the history of science, would know these facts. We are something like that. We do not know the implications of Vedanta. The way $E=mc^2$ is a great equation of Physics, that shook our understanding of the atomic world, our understanding of the universe, just like that, the simple Vedantic equation Aham Brahmasmi, discovered thousands of years ago, can shake the spiritual world, social world and intellectual world. Just that, we are not able to grasp it. Even though scientists knew that $E=mc^2$ could be used to make the Atomic Bomb, it was not made in a day. It took years. And Einstein himself had to write to Roosevelt to say that yes it can be done. Similarly, Aham Brahmasmi, is the famous equation of Vedanta.

What do Vedanta scriptures do? They tell you that the phenomenal universe, that you are aware of, is unreal. And it just proves and shows that it is unreal. The phenomenal universe, the universe that we are so well aware of. Now once you remove that, reality shines before you on its own. Scriptures do not bring reality before you.

For example, let's not take any name of a religion or a scripture, let us convert it in our own language. We say that Vishnu is God. You are imposing a truth before a follower. Nowadays, it has become very popular to say, Krishna is God. Krishna is the only God. You are imposing a truth before your followers. And forcing them to accept that. This is true of every religion, including the Vaishnava religion in India.

But Vedanta does not say that. Vedanta says that, what is your reality? Are you your body? Are you the mind? As we shall see. Vedanta goes on to show that your understanding of yourself is unreal, wrong. Remove that. What remains? What remains is your truth. If you know the truth, you will be free. Know that truth and you will be all powerful. Because, in reality you are infinite, in reality you are all majesty, in reality, you are all knowledge. It is the superimposition, things that have been imposed on you that make you appear limited. You really do not become limited. The superimposition, things that have been imposed on you make you appear limited. So, what Vedanta does is that it just shows that phenomenal universe that you identify yourself with is unreal. It does nothing else. So essentially scriptures are indirect means. They are not direct means.

But in other religions, whatever religions you may talk of, including this Bhagavat Dharma,

which says, Krishna alone is God, is a direct means, where they say that, well, I say this, believe it. If you don't believe a seat is booked for you in hell.
Vedanta will never talk like that. Vedanta will say, Okay fine, if you are happy with this state, what can I say? But if ever arises a situation, where you become fed up with this, if a situation arises, when you say that I don't want any of these happiness and misery, no more pleasure because every pleasure comes with pain, and I am fed up. I want to give up both. Vedanta will say, come. Here I am for you. This is a wrong idea that we think we can have happiness, without misery. It is wrong to think that we can have pleasure without pain. It is a wrong idea that we can have life without death. With life is born death, with pleasure is born misery, or pain. They go hand in hand. You have one, you have to take the other. There is no option. If you take a coin, with the head of the coin, the tail will come automatically. There is no way that you can let go of it. Coin means Head and tail. If you take a coin, you have both automatically. It is not like that you go and purchase a dress in a supermarket and when you take the dress, and you take the wrappings and throw it in the dustbin, it is not like that. It is like a coin. And by chance, if you get a coin, only with heads on both sides, it is either a fake or a special one to be put in a curio shop.
So, what exactly happens in this phenomenal universe? Ignorance rules supreme. We shall discuss more of it as we proceed. And it creates six transformations. Famously known as Shad Vikar. Six transformations. It's like your existence becomes apparent, you are born, you grow, you decay, you become old, and you finally disintegrate. But do you really undergo all these transformations? Vedanta says No. Your true "you" will never undergo these transformations. You are beyond all these. When you go through Vedanta, it teaches you, how actually you are beyond these transformations. The transformation is of the body. Very famously, Raman Maharshi had some cancer or some disease. Somebody asked how come a great person like you has this disease. He said this is dharma of the body. I am Atman. And I personally know of many great monks in the Ramakrishna Mission, who were not the least perturbed by the diseases they had. When asked they would say "I am Atman. I am different from this body". Even on death bed. So according to Vedanta what exactly happens. Vedanta says you don't gain something new as you go through these transformations. Suppose, somebody says that, Vishnu is God, you attain Vishnu. Krishna is God, you attain Krishna. Somebody promises you heaven, you go to heaven. Here it is not like that. Here the six changes, six transformations, is like a disease. You catch a disease, you become bedridden, and take medicine and you get well. Now what happens? Nothing happens? You regain your health. You are not getting something new. You lost something, you misplaced something, and you are searching for it and you found it. Did you find something new? No, you did not. Acharya Shankar, he uses different examples. His favourite example is that of sandal wood. When it is placed in water for a long time, it

acquires a foul smell. Rub it well. The foul smell goes away. You are pure Atman. Right now, you are diseased. What is the disease? Disease of six transformations. You are born, you grow, you catch disease, transformations of various kinds, get old, and die. People may or may not shed tears for you. But the fact will remain that once one dies, people will say he or she is no more. Once you realise what you truly are, then you realise that your true state is just like regaining your health. This is what Acharya Shakar says. You regain your health. It is not like gaining something fresh. It is not like going to heaven and having these huris and paris and this and that. Just a big NO. You become what you are. So, this is how Vedanta works.

Now the question comes, well if I regain myself, if it is ever existent, if my nature is ever existent, then why do we need to study? What is the need for this? And if this bondage is real, that means, if it is not true, then scriptures are futile. We don't need to. Acharya will say no, it is not that, when you study something, when you contemplate on it, your ignorance gets removed. This is the most important crucial thing of Vedanta. This is the crux of Vedanta. When you meditate, what happens to you? When you listen to these talks, what happens to you? When you study scriptures, what happens to you? When you work hard on yourself spiritually, what happens to you? Your ignorance gets removed. So, although it is ever existent, although the truth is self-evident, yet it needs working.

Often when you listen to some of these popular critics, who have not the least understanding of Vedanta, they go on talking nonsense. Where did this ignorance come from? Why did this ignorance come? Is it real? Is it permanent? If it is not real then? Here we are not telling something just theoretically. Everything we are talking about will be discussed in detail in this work.

What happens when this ignorance is removed, when this duality is removed? According to Buddhists, nothing else remains. Nirvana! But in this Karika, or in Vedanta, as we shall see, what really remains is pure consciousness, i.e, Atman. So, this is the general introduction that Acharya Shankar gives. And he also mentions the four sections of Karika which we detailed in the previous talk.

First one is Agama where Gaudapada goes on quoting from the scriptures, whatever has been discussed in the Mandukya Upanishad. And in the Vaitathya, he logically demolishes any form of dualism, any form of duality. And then, he brings in Advaita. He is not only demolishing; he also says what his view is. And then comes the peace. It takes up every other system of thought and shows how they are mutually contradictory, and hence they cannot be accepted. Ultimately Advaita remains.

Here just a word of caution. Indian philosophers, particularly philosophers belonging to religious traditions, were not ordinary people. When you read any of these systems, for example if you read Sankhya, Sankhya will appear to be the absolute truth. When you study

Yog, Yog will appear to be the absolute truth. So, either you are meant for Vedanta or you are not. I give an example from my own experience, which happened long ago. We have been brought up in the tradition of Shankaracharya. And we take pride in that because we are sannyasis, belonging to Dasnami Sampraday (ten sects of sannyasis), which Acharya Shankar had organised. Shankaracharya is our guru. He is the Param Guru. Once I was studying Ramanujacharya's philosophy. And there he was attacking Advaita, and those points that he raised were so powerful and so true, phenomenal was the right word, and I got so disturbed! My God! Everything that I have studied till now is all wrong! I lost my peace of mind and I lost my sleep. The next day, I started looking for the answers. Fortunately, I found a very good book where this was discussed. It is called Saptabhangi Naya. Seven objections of Ramanuja and very simple sentences. The teachers of Advaita have refuted everything that Ramanuja said. From that day I decided never to study any other system of philosophy. My understanding, my knowledge may be skewed, because of that. I know I belong to the tradition of Advaita. The little knowledge that I have of other systems is more than enough for me. Because I am not a prophet. Shree Ramakrishna used say that, if you want to kill yourself, blade is enough. If you want to kill others, you need a sword and shield. I need to grow. If you find my words useful, please come to me and learn from me. Those who want to argue go to the Parliament. If you want to fight, go to the Pakistan border. But if you want to learn, come to me.

If you say that your path is fantastic, well go ahead. I have no issues with you. May God give you lots of followers. I am not here to quarrel with you. I am not here to argue with you. I belong to the tradition of Vyasa, Shankaracharya, Shree Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda. Vedanta is not meant for all. And for that matter, Vaishnava tradition is not meant for all. And therein lies the strength of Hindu religion. It does not say that if this trouser does not fit you, we will shorten your legs to make them fit the trouser. No, we don't. Swamiji said Hinduism is not one coat fit all. Here we provide tailor made coats. The coat is cut according to your shape and size. Vedanta is not meant for everyone. But some of its principles are universal and can be used. But that is a different subject. For that you need to listen to our first talk. So, this is the introduction by Acharya.

Now we begin the first Mantra of Mandukya Upanishad.

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हरिः ॐ।

ॐ इत्येतदक्शर्मिदं सर्वं तस्योपव्याख्यानं भूतं भवद्ः भविष्यदिति सर्वमोंकार एव।

यच्चान्यत्ः त्रिकालातीतं तदप्योंकार एव॥ (Mantra 1)

Harih Aum. Aum the word is all this. A clear explanation of it (is the following. All that is past, present and future,is verily Aum. That which is beyond the triple conception of time is also truly Aum

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Akshara is pure consciousness. Kshara is what decays, while akshara is that which does not decay, and is absolute. Akshara is everything. Whatever is there, in past, present and future is all explanation of that alone. And everything is AUM.
And says that, whatever is beyond this time, past, present and future, that is also AUM. AUM is everything.
This is the first mantra of Mandukya Upanishad. In very simple words, AUM is everything. Some years ago, Time magazine had put it on the cover, just say OM. People have made it so cheap. It is a very profound subject.
Before I explain this, what this Mantra means to say, let us see what exactly happens, when we sit for meditation. Normally our mind is full of this idea and that idea and we can't even concentrate. But the great saints and sages, particularly those who belong to the realm of being a prophet, or incarnation or great sage, great Yogis, can control their mind perfectly. As they control their mind, a multiplicity of ideas, and the multiplicity of objects, multiplicity of words, slowly merge into one. And as they merge into one, they remain conscious of one single thing, which is undulated sound. Undulated, means, unbroken sound. Now when I am speaking, the sound is being broken. For example when I say Broken, the uniform sound is getting broken in Br..o..ke..n. There are different ups and downs. This is not a uniform undulated sound. Imagine the deep sound of a gong. It is a deep humming sound. Surprisingly every Yogi hears it. Muslim mystic Al Gazali, I was reading his book, he also mentions it. Christian saints have also mentioned it. And Shri Ramakrishna has beautifully said that, sandhya, ritualistic worship of the Hindus, merges into Gayatri, i.e. they are unifying and Gayatri merges into AUM. Mind that the term is "merges",. Laya, to merge. We are going to discuss merging. This spread that is there of the words, they start merging. And then Shree Ramakrishna says that, once you break that undulation, you merge into samadhi. Merge into pure consciousness. Swamiji also says this, somewhere in his complete works, that, when your meditation becomes deep, when you go into the depths of meditation, and your mind soars into samadhi, the last thing that you are aware of is this AUM sound. It is just undulating sound. And once you go into samadhi, and then finally your mind starts coming back, as Shree Ramakrishna has described many times, the first thing you are aware of in this phenomenal universe, this universe of duality and objects, sound and sight, is AUM. So, this is a reality that every Yogi experiences.
How are Upanishads superior? Just that they realised this thousands of years ago. I wonder if you can understand what thousands of years mean. Do you know that the first English literature that made a name was starting from Chaucer and then Shakespeare. That is English literature hardly four five hundred years old. And every time they talk about this and that work, they either belong to Greek tradition or Roman Tradition. And they are hardly 2500 years old. And the Upanishads are before that. The oldest epic in the world, according

to western world, is the epic of Gilgamesh. It is hardly 1500 BC. Upanishads are older than that. The problem is that most western scholars haven't heard of the Upanishads. Whatever they have heard is superficial. That will give you some perspective. We Indians today unfortunately run after the western world of America, England and France etc. These are just five or six hundred years old cultures. And imagine the truth our sages are talking of! AUM. Now this idea was not very clear during the Vedic period. Some sages must have come up with this brilliant idea that let us give a symbol to this. The undulation, the undisturbed sound, and they called it AUM.

The logic was so simple. And as it was simple, it was profound. Anything to be profound has to be very simple. We are moved by profound things. Some of the lines from Shakespeare are just profound. Why? Because they are very simple. Complex things never make profound things. Complex ideas are never profound. It is the simplicity that encapsules profundity. To be profound, you have to be simple.

They said that the entire universe is made up of objects. And the mind grasps every object as an idea. It is just an idea, and so a mental state. If I see an object, maybe a pen, whatever the pen may be, it will come to me as a mental state. The light reflected from the object reaches my eyes, creates sensation, creates an awareness, and my mind throws a reaction. It is a mental state. Whatever be the object, the mind takes it as an idea or as a mental state. Every time you take an idea, ideas and words are one and the same to the mind. Later this was popularised beautifully that Krishna and his name are one and the same. Lord and his name are one and the same. Other religions also have this idea. Anyway, that is not our concern. The concern is that the ideas and words are one and the same. And the object, whatever that object, is grasped as an idea.

We have these huge galaxies, we have this huge universe, scientists say that they are fifteen billion years old, and they say their size is so and so. I tend to get confused with these dimensions because, regularly they are changing the dimension. And yet, that hugeness of time, that hugeness of size, is grasped by the mind, just as an idea. An idea is always a word, whatever be the word. Think of anybody, any language, anywhere, any land, the first sound a child makes is Aw, from the throat, and the last sound the child makes is Ma from lips. That is why the first word babies say is Ma, Mamma, and it is easy for them to say Babba, pappa because they can only use their lips. If you ask them to speak complex words, they will not be able to. They know only how to open their lips and close them, the sound coming out of it. In between the throat and the lips is the rolling. The guttural is Aw and the rolling is U. Ma stops. Thus AUM. In Sanskrit A is as in Awe. U as in blue and M as in Mom. Now AUM is not a word. It is a symbol. It is a symbol of all the ideas. Because whatever be the object, it is taken as an idea. Whatever the idea, has words. Aum is the metrics, is a substratum of all the words that can be created anywhere in any language. AUM means the

universal sound.

Mandukya Upanishad will be discussing AUM as everything. And this is why, *AUm iti etad akSharam idam sarvaM.* If you look at the universe, everything it has got has come from pure consciousness. We shall discuss more of it later.

On the one hand, there is pure consciousness, which is the substratum of every object. And here is AUM, which is the substratum of every word. Without AUM all sounds vanish. Because whatever sound you create, it has to be between the throat and the lips. If you take pure consciousness away, all objects collapse. And all objects are taken as ideas, mental states. Ideas and words are the same. So, AUM represents this entire phenomenal universe. Everything that can be taken by the mind, as an idea, is encompassed within AUM, and the silence that follows AUM.

Nowadays there are some popular teachers, they have popularised this idea of loudly saying AUM with M continuing. These things sound actually ridiculous. These are contemplative things. Neither do these teachers realise, nor their students. AUM is a contemplative thing. There are gong sounds, and they start sounding Aum. And just say AUM. They are sitting in Park and keep on sounding AUM.

AUM is a matter of contemplation. Everything merges in AUM. So, we have two substratum. We have objects. Objects are grasped as ideas. This is the simple relationship. It is not as complicated and if you want, we have this series on Hinduism in English, there you will see, there is a talk on AUM. I have also discussed the same thing. These are the basic facts and naturally, we cannot come up with new facts and new descriptions. In Bengali also, those of you who want, we have discussions on AUM, on many occasions. In the Raj Yog talks there is a discussion on AUM. And there is one series in the playlist, Hindu Jeevan Dharma, also AUM has been discussed.

When we think of the Universe, we think of objects, these are ideas, and ideas are words. And every word is confined within AUM. Something like when you say H2O. H2O is water. Moment, you say H2O, a chemistry professor knows everything. What is its molecular weight, what items make it, what are its chemical and physical properties, everything is in that symbol. The symbol of water, wherever it might be, you can find water on Mars, that will also be H2O. The water of the ocean is H2O, the water of Sharbat is H2O. Everything is capsuled in H2O. Just like that, every word confined, locked inside this AUM.

This is what the Upanishad says, AUM iti etad akSharam idam sarvaM. Aum is everything. Tas Upavyakhyan (Upavyakhyan is when you describe something) says the best way to know Brahman is through AUM. We have talks on Raja Yoga both in English and Bengali, if you are interested, listen to Raja Yog talks. Raja Yog says, Tasya Vachak Pranava. AUM is the symbol of God. For example, we have the name of God in different religions. Here in India we have thirty-three crore Gods and every God has a name, Islam has a name for

God. And Christianity has a name for God. But truly does India have a name for God? It does not have. It uses the symbol. That symbol is AUM. Because through AUM you get the right pointer.

So, AUM is the right pointer to God. AUM is not the name of God. Sometimes, it is mentioned that way. But actually, it is the stairway to God, it is the path to God. God is infinite. If you name God, whatever name you give, it becomes finite. You can have a pointer. You cannot have a name. So, when people criticise Hindus for having idols, they forget that, they themselves are using names for the infinite. Naming the infinite is as good as giving it a form. But of course, those minds are so ordinary that it is beyond them to understand this. Swamiji says in one of his talks, if you say God, use the word God, it signifies nothing. What do you understand by the word God? Nothing. AUM very logically, clearly explains what God is.

Past, present and future, these are divisions of time. This is the phenomenal universe. The phenomenal universe is characterised by time. Those of you who have studied the nature of time, Some may have read Stefen Hawking, who wrote “Brief history of time” and there have been ideas about time, whether we can have time travel, can we go to the future, can we go to the past etc. Yog philosophy says that, past present and future, they are always present. But they are present in a different form. Not in the form that we understand. They are present in the subtle form. Once they become past there is again subtle form. So, if you can make a time travel, you will not be able to see the past or the future, the way you are seeing the present. All those popular quotations like, Past is gone, future is yet to come, these are all gross understanding. Because, past and future stay as subtle not as gross. It is not like taking a movie reel, taking it forward and backward and see pictures. But time is not like that. The mind can perceive only the present. It can perceive an object, the way it is only in the present, not in the past. Not even in dreams.

The idea is there is only pure consciousness. When it takes up ignorance, there is no way of knowing, because that is beyond mind. Why mind takes up ignorance, no one knows, and there is no way of knowing. Mind cannot know what is beyond mind. If I am confined, in this room, right now my door is closed, I cannot know what is happening outside. I can know what is there inside this room. Mind can know everything that is within the realm of the mind. Two things are beyond mind. God and Power. This divine ignorance, known as Maya or Avidya, is beyond mind. Because that is the dividing line between Mind and God. There is no way you can transcend it. Absolutely not. So in the phenomenal universe, as we mentioned, everything that is there in past, present and future, that is their objects in whatever form, they may be in subtle form, it is all AUM. And the silence that follows is that which is beyond this world of mind. Which is beyond time. Anything that is beyond time, is beyond mind. Anything that is beyond mind, is beyond time. The first mantra focuses on that and says, whatever is

there, in this phenomenal universe, within the realm of time, within the realm of mind, is AUM. And that which lies beyond it, that is AUM.
That is all about the first Mantra.

4. Four States of Existence

Right now we are in the middle of a most complicated discussion. After this, understanding the discussions will become easier. In Mandukya Upanishad, the arguments used and truths that they reveal are pretty profound. But they can be so counterintuitive that the mind may refuse to accept it.
In the previous chapter, we discussed the mantra no one. It was described that AUM is everything. And that discussion was pretty intense. If there is a difficulty in understanding, a re-read one or two times will clarify the matter.
Before we continue with Mantra number two, I will like to draw your attention to certain fundamental things about Vedanta. Some of these things we discussed in the first chapter, where we explained what Vedanta is. But because it is a running topic, some of these ideas may have to be explained further.
Vedanta is not a system of belief. Think of a political system, it stands on belief. Vedanta, unlike any religious system or a thought process or a political system, is not a belief system. Take for example Christianity or Vaishnava traditions in India. They are entirely based on belief. Great sages experienced something , saw something, and they narrated their experience. They were no doubt great sages. For Example Jesus, was a prophet. But after that it is faith and belief alone. Naturally, the rational minds attack them and they cannot defend. And the only defence they have is that this is my belief,my faith system, and there are people in certain systems, they will come out with swords to defend. We are even attacked regularly.
Vedanta is not at all like that. On the one hand it is based entirely on spiritual realisation of the greats and not of one person. This is very important. We have a series of saints. Sometimes that series is mentioned as in say Mundaka Upanishad or Chandogya Upanishad or Vridaranyak Upanishad, and in many other Upanishads the names are not mentioned. For example, in Ishavasya Upanishad and in Mandukya Upanishad, there are no names as such. But more important than that is that you can place the entire thing very logically. Thirdly, you too can realise this truth. These are the three very important facets of Vedanta, which cannot be matched by any system of thought, cannot be matched by any religion.
Let me tell you a very interesting joke. It is an interesting fact, but it came out as a joke. In

Gorbachev's time the USSR started disintegrating. So, the idea of a communist state had failed. An elderly lady asked Gorbachev, who was telling that Communism is an experiment. There is a famous statement, those of you, who are familiar with communism would know, "Socialism is an experiment". That elderly lady asked, Mr. President Sir, is socialism a Biological experiment? or a social experiment? Gorbachev thought for a moment and said this is a social experiment. The elderly lady said, now I understand. Had it been a biological experiment, it would have been first tried of mice or rats.

But, Vedanta is neither an experiment nor a belief system. It is based on hard core realisations, and not by one or two, not in a particular age. From the time of Vedic Rishis to Shri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Ramana Maharshi all had the same realisation. And is based on very sound arguments. And most importantly, you too can realise it.

Jesus was born to take our sins on himself. Even Jesus is unique. And according to Christianity, I am a born sinner. But it is not so in Vedanta. Vedanta will say, Swami Vivekananda could realise this truth, and you too can. Intrinsically, at the spiritual level, you have the same potential of knowledge that say Swami Vivekananda or Ramana Maharshi had. In this relative world, you two are not the same, that is a different issue. As far spiritual knowledge is concerned, as far as knowledge of Vedant is concerned, you are of the same potential. This is a fundamental difference.

Most people may not think so, but it is beyond the capability of the human mind to be rational. Great Albert Einstein's, famous theory of relativity, changed the world. Hitler had fifty scientists to write a book, or maybe one hundred, to say that the theory of relativity is wrong. When the book reached Albert Einstein, he just looked at the title and kept it aside. His wife asked wouldn't you like to read it? Einstein said, if I had been wrong, one scientist would have been enough. The moment you have fifty scientists , it means that they are trying to prove something which is not true. This is your scientific community and the same Albert Einstein refused to believe that an atomic bomb could be made out of his $E=mc^2$. He himself refused to believe that the universe is expanding. He refused to believe that there can be black holes.

Rationality is a very difficult thing. It comes with a huge premium. Those people who say that we are rational, are actually blindest of believers of a certain system. They consider only their system to be rational. Outside that everyone is irrational.

Vedanta does not go that way. Whatever we are discussing here, is not something that we need to believe in. They are hard core facts, truths realised by many sages and over ages, truths that are extremely rational, and truths that anyone can realise. You don't have to run to a book and say my book says this, my book says that. It is not so. When we say that Upanishad is saying something, it implies that three essential conditions are adhered to. Number one is continuity of spiritual wisdom, and number two, the rationality of it and third

provability. anyone can have the same experience. Everything Upanishad says fulfils these three conditions.

We will be discussing three states existence, three states of mind actually. But the discussion here will be the four states of Atman. Or you can say four quarters of Atman. This we shall explain.

First one is the waking state, Second is dream state, third is dreamless state. Now see how difficult Vedanta is to explain in English. How difficult it is to explain to non-Indians,. We have very clear terms. Awake is Jagrat, Dream is Swapna, Dreamless is Sushupti and there is a fourth,Chatturiya. Chattwari in Sanskrit means chaturth, i.e. fourth. Cha is generally removed and this fourth is called Turiya. In English you don't even have a term for the third, forget the fourth. The first one is waking, the second is dream. They don't have a unique word even for Dreamless. That shows how constricted their philosophical understanding is. For example when Immanuel Kant started writing philosophy, he came up with new words, as he felt the existing lexicon, existing words were not enough to express his ideas. So he came up with new words. And he took pages just to explain what those words meant. If you talk to any Indian, he will understand Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupti. Now in English,for Sushupti, instead of one single term, they have two words: dream and less. And Turiya, the fourth, there is no way that religions brought up in dualistic traditions, dualistic thought process, and worse based on a book can even be understood. We will have to understand these three states very well, to understand the concept of Atman.

We need to keep in mind that, as we mentioned, these are the words of the sages, who have realised the truth. They were pure, they had done Sadhana and Tapasya for years, they had absolutely no selfish motive. There is no reason not to believe them, especially when they say, you too can realise this.

It is said that micro and macro, the individual and the universal, or rather individual and the collective, are made on the same plan. There are many many expressions for this. One of them is Yat Brahmande, Tat Pindande. Whatever is in the cosmos, that is the universe, is in an atom. Now physics people will say, how far is that true? What they meant to say is that, it is like the idea of fractals. In fractals, there is a particular design and that design keeps repeating, and when you see the whole, actually it is a pattern, made up of the individual similar patterns. The Hindu thought process is strictly on the lines of fractals. And he should take his sample from somewhere and if you study you will find that the entire thing has the same pattern. Those of you who tried to solve equations related to infinity (our famous mathematician Ramanujam who did lots of research on the equations which tend to be infinite, in series), what they do is they cut anywhere and solve that and then apply it universally.

Vedanta does not force this idea down our throat telling that since we are telling so,

individual and universal are the same. Vedanta says here is the individual, and now take all the individuals together, not a crowd but the whole cosmos, and the terms that you use here with their (individuals) properties, change the terms (for the whole) that have the same properties. It is so simple. Actually, I keep saying that Vedanta is so grand. Think of a classroom. Take one kid and then take the collective lot, the whole lot, the general property of one and the general property of that class are nearly the same. As far as intrinsic things are concerned, meaning as far as learning is concerned, for example, we have students of class four, one student is learning certain basic things, say mathematics. The entire class is also learning the same thing. This is the idea of fractals. And this is something Vedanta relies upon completely and fully. So if you keep these two ideas in mind, first three states, rather four, and second micro and macro , the individual and the collective. Then understanding the next three four mantras will be very easy.
So,with that introduction we enter Mantra number two.

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सर्वं ह्येतद् ब्रह्मायमात्मा ब्रह्म सोऽयमात्मा चतुष्पात् || (Mantra 2)

All this is verily Brahman, this atman is Brahman, this atman has four quarters.
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Let me mention here that we belong to the Vedanta tradition of monks. We have four Mahavakyas, i.e.Four great truths. Monks that belong to the line of Shankaracharya, are known as Dasnami Sannyasis. Shankaracharya organised the monks into ten sects and hence the word Dasnami. They have one of these four Mahavakyas as the mantra for sadhana. One of these is Ayam atma Brahma. I am Brahman. Same as Aham Brahmasmi. I am atma, brahma. The first mantra says *AUM iti etad akSharam idam sarvaM.* AUM which is ekakshari which is everything. Now in this mantra it says *sarvam heytad Brahma.* Brahman is everything. The word Brahman has come from Bri which means large, great. Think of the largest you can think of, Brahman is larger than that. Think of the universe, cosmos, think of all the universe that you can , Brahman is larger than that. It can also mean that which grows. Bri has many implications, many meanings. And it is not a theological concept, it is not something like God, the way we believe in Shiva, the way we believe in Krishna. This is something that anyone can realise in meditation, that absolute and pure consciousness alone abides. That alone exists.
Sarvam heytad Brahma, whatever we are seeing is Brahman. Brahman is everything. Everything is not Brahman. An object, say a pen, is not Brahman. Very often people who do not understand Vedanta, they make mistakes in explaining and worse, when they attack, they attack wrongly. This pen is not Brahman. This microphone is not Brahman. Brahman alone is the underlying reality, Brahman alone has become all this, this apparent reality of

the pen, this apparent reality of a object is there because the true reality underlying it is of Brahman. When they say everything is Brahman, they mean to say that Brahman alone exists. Everything else is like waves in an ocean.

Now, Sarvam Heytad Brahma, ayamatma brahma, soyomatma chatushpat, there are three statements in the mantra. The first says, All this verily is Brahman, the second says, Atman is Brahman, and third, Atman has four quarters.

First, Brahman alone exists, Brahman alone is reality, and I would request viewers to listen to our first talk on Vedanta, where we have discussed how we can rationally see that Brahman alone exists and nothing else exists. And if you chance to read the biographies and the works of Shri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, you will realise that they had this realisation and not once but all the time. Atman alone exists, Brahma alone exists, Atman is Brahman. So there cannot be any question.Rationally it has been proven by Shankaracharya. I used Acharys Shankar's arguments in that talk, and the great masters have realised it, so how can you question it? They very clearly said, you too experience it. In fact this is the goal of Vedanta. Vedanta discusses all these so that you can realise it here and now, not after death. In other systems, you can go to their highest, i.e. heaven after death. But not so in Vedanta. Vedanta says here and now. You have to realise here and now.

And this Atman soyam atma , has four quarters; chatushpat. Pat here means legs. But actually, it is a quarter. In our earlier talks we explained that objects, words and ideas are one and the same. In fact in the previous talk, when we were discussing AUM, we also discussed it.

In the simplest form, here is say a pen, pen is an object, pen is a word, pen is an idea in my mind. When I see a pen, when I hear the word pen, when I experience that pen, whether it be the pen the object or whether it be the pen the word, it arouses the idea that is there in my mind, and I get the knowledge of the pen. As far as mind is concerned, objects , words i.e. name, and ideas are one and the same. It makes no difference. And that is why, when you think of something that you love you feel happy. For example, kids love chocolates. If you give them chocolates, they feel happy. If you just promise chocolate, they will feel happy. And if they think of chocolate, they become happy. Because these three are one and the same. A famous expression in India is about pickles. Pickles are sour. If you take pickles, your mouth becomes watery. You start salivating. Now if you just say pickles, you start salivating and you think of pickles and you start salivating. What does it imply? Actually, pickle the object, pickle the word and pickle the idea, they are one and the same to the mind.

Vedanta takes it one step forward. Not only Vedanta, but actually this comes from very old Greek traditions, Greko roman rather, it has been taken up by Jews, and which was later taken up by the Christians as "the beginning was word, the word was with God and word

was God". Although Christianity explains the word as Jesus, but in the old Greko Roman idea, ideas and words are one and the same. And there was a common word for that - logos.

Vedanta is not interested in the theory of all these ideas, words and objects. What Vedanta is interested in, is that if you can understand the oneness of these three, that is objects, words and ideas are one and the same, then in one stroke you can throw all these three away, and what remains is pure consciousness. Because, without pure consciousness, without pure mind, now we are talking in simpler terms that is mind, mind is in a state of turbulence, because there is an idea. That idea is externally expressed through words, and is externally available through objects. They are one and the same. Once you understand the unity of these three, you can throw these three away, absolutely. Those of you who are more interested in understanding how you can throw these away, I request them listen to our Raja Yog talks. Raja Yog says that every impulse coming to the mind is like a disturbance. The technical term for this is Vritti. The goal of life is to quieten this Vritti, to still this Vrittis permanently.

When you quieten the Vrittis, your mind becomes absolutely calm. You have now thrown away this existential world, where we have the ideas, where we have the words,and where we have the objects. This is the Goal of Vedanta.

To understand that AUM is everything, Brahman is everything, Atman is Brahman all this. The external world is superimposed on us, superimposed is like putting on masks. We have certain dances in India where masks are used, for example Kathakali and folk dances like Chhau. This was also the concept during Roman time, who loved all these circuses and dances and they used to put on masks. They called them persona, from which the word personality has come. Nowadays they don't put on a mask but use makeup.

Similarly, this world, the external world, is the persona on pure consciousness. And this pure consciousness looks at that persona through its own persona of mind, loves it, hates it etc. See, just think, imagine the irony of it. You alone exist, you exist as subject, me, you exist as object, say the microphone,. Microphone is a mask on pure consciousness, microphone is the persona on pure consciousness. It is being perceived by me, the pure consciousness on which my mind is the persona, mind is the mask. Pure consciousness is looking at pure consciousness, through the mask, which acts as the lens through which it is seeing. And is looking at itself by keeping a persona there.

It is the unravelling of this mystery, tearing of this mystery, that we have in this Mandukya Karika. Vedanta in general and Mandukya Karika in particular. Those of you are interested in being brave heart,in tearing away the mask, please continue with these classes. If you are not that braveheart, if you believe in taking these different types of Drum and Dhols, and go on singing Hare Ram, Hare Krishna, then these talks are not meant for you.

Vedanta says that once you can understand that these three are one and these are persona, you can drive them away in one stroke. Now don't ask me if I am convinced of this. Theoretically yes practically No.

If you chance to read any of the sacred books of any other religion, they will be talking about God. For them, God is real. In Islam Allah is real. For a Vishanva devotee, Vishnu is real. For Christians, God is real. Why come down to Atman? Acharya Shankar says, very beautifully, and I am presenting things in as simple a way as possible, says, the knowledge of Brahman is quite vague. Vague in the sense that one cannot understand because, knowledge of Brahman, comes to us or is given to us, indirectly, Through this means, through that means. So it is very difficult for us to grasp. But as far as self is concerned, I, everyone is conscious of it. Even a baby is conscious of it. Even a baby knows that she is hungry. A child knows he wants to go out and play. A child asserts, I want this.

I was reading some jokes about kids. One gentleman wrote that he has a three year old daughter, very adorable, and she loves her grandpa. The day she came to know that her Grandpa is her Father's Daddy, she started crying and throwing tantrums and told her papa to go right away and change his Papa right away. And said you cannot have my grandpa as your father. You go and get a different father. So funny. But assertion, Daddy, I am telling go change your papa, is without realising that papas cannot be changed like that.

Because we understand ourselves, we know ourselves, we have a very clear sense of ourselves, that is why this Upanishad, comes down to our level, holds our hand, and starts taking us upward. This is the beauty of Upanishads.

Dear Listeners, dear viewers, dear students, I have gone through scriptures, I know scriptures, this is what I have been doing for many years, anything else other than being in scriptures, and being a monk, I live in scriptures. This idea that, take hold of someone's finger or hand, and lead that person slowly upward, is something you don't find in any other scriptures, not even Indian scriptures, which are the masters of spirituality. Forget about other religions. Whenever we think of religion, whenever we talk of religion, the first thing they will say is, in the beginning was God. And that is how it begins. But not in Vedanta. Vedanta begins with here you are, what a realistic approach. It's a pity that people do not study Vedanta. Why don't they study? Because Vedanta requires a lot of brain, and the arguments that Vedanta presents seems to make your head explode. And as I say, they are so counterintuitive! All your beliefs, your own existence is blown away, forget your beliefs! Forget about the beliefs of your society, religion, your God! They are secondary! The very idea of you yourself is blown away. So, now when they say that soyom atma chatushpat, previously also we have said that Atman has four quarters, four parts, four legs. When we think of a chair, we think of four legs, when we think of an animal, we think of four legs. When we talk about Atman having four parts, these are not four distinct parts. It is just to

make us understand. It is not intrinsic but imagined. The parts are not intrinsic, like a cow who has four legs as intrinsic. The very gene of the cow decides that it will have four legs. Here for Atman, quarters are imagined. Think of a coin. We in India have one rupee. You can imagine any number of parts to it. Imagine one hundred parts, you will have one paisa for each part. And if we have two parts,then 50 paise, 4 parts in earlier times we used to have 4 annas for each part. Actually in India , although we came up with, decimal system & zero, our currency and counting system was based on quarters , four. So we have four, sixteen and sixty four. One rupee was 64 paise. Which was 16 annas, and from 16 annas came further down One paise (4x4x4 = 64). Interestingly we gave the decimal system to the world, but it was not adopted. I don't know why. Americans of course have not adopted. They still talk in miles, pounds. But the decimal system is such an easy system. But may be when Aryabhatta and all his disciples worked out the decimal system, much before that the quarter system was ingrained in the Indian system. When I was young, in sixties, the concept of char anna, At anna, and sawa (i.e one quarter, we still use sawa to mention time..quarter past three we call sawa tin , sare tin for half past three etc.) all over the country. So Atman has four quarters, and these four quarters are not intrinsic, but imagined. Now, if it is an imagined thing, those of you, who are slightly elderly, those of you who may have crossed forty or fifty, In India, you just have to change the terms. And those who are listening from abroad, will understand that. So here in India we had a famous char anna coin which was 25 paise, if you take two, it becomes half a rupee, and you have three, then three quarters of a rupee. So one quarter, two quarter and three quarter. Then comes the fourth, then we do not say four quarters, we say One rupee. So difficult to understand, but so simple. I'll tell you, from my personal experience, when I was a young Brhamachari, a novice, and when I was being taught this subject by a really great Vedanti Shrimad Swami Mokshadanandaji Maharaj. As I learnt from him, when he was explaining things, I just could not understand this. When you talk of one quarter, it is one quarter. When you talk of two quarters, it is two quarters, when you say three quarters it is three quarters. When you say four quarters, it is no more four quarters, it is full. If you say four quarters, you are making a fundamental mistake. When you say four quarters, it is a word play. This kind of word play confuses people. Actually it is full. If you go to the market, particularly if you had gone to market in the earlier times, you would say char anna, bara anna, never would you say sola anna. You will say one rupee. It becomes complete.

Also In this sarvam heytad Brahma, ayam atma Brahma, soyam ATma chatushpat, when they say chatushpat, they mean to say that these four quarters, they are not intrinsic. They are imagined.

And as we mentioned, what is at the micro level, that is our level, same thing is at the macro level, starting Mantra no 3, this idea will continue.

These four states that we are mentioning, the first state is known as waking state (Jagrata in Sanskrit). Second is Dream (Swapna), the third is dreamless (Sushupti). These three states are represented by AUM, which was discussed in the previous talk. Whenever you have something, you also have the idea of absence of that something, the technical term for this is Abhab. So if there is sound there has to be a state there is no sound. That is soundlessness. In AUM, A comes out from the throat, U rolls and M ends with lips. All the words that are there, are locked within these three letters. Every sound is locked within AUM. But since there is sound, there has to be a state where there is no sound. Soundlessness. That is the fourth state, Turiya. But is it really a state? It cannot be. Because, soundlessness is that state where it is uniform. When there is uniform, how can you say that it is a state? The moment it breaks in Aw, Moment it transforms into U, moment it transforms in Ma, these are states. These are transformations. When the whole thing is a complete solid mass, you cannot say it is a state. It is pure existence. So what follows after AUM, the silence, this silence that is the fourth as far as AUM is concerned. Basically in English, we have Waking and sleeping and sleep has two parts, dream and dreamless. Now scientists have come up with REM sleep and so on. Fundamental things they miss out. This fourth state, which is the silence after AUM, is not really a state. This is a unified mass from which the other three emerge. Jagrat, Swapna Sushupti. Waking, Dream Dreamless. These three are superimpositions actually. These are not really states. Just like the four quarters. If you say one quarter, it is not intrinsic, it is not a real thing. It is not like the leg of a chair. It is something you superimpose to understand one quarter. And as far as the fourth is concerned, it is not even a state, it is a solid thing. So, this is the very important concept that we mentioned, the four states.

These four states are at the microstate with me, with the self. These are also at cosmic level. And these are with AUM too because as we mentioned, objects and words are the same, objects are at the individual level, objects are at the collective level, and both of these are represented by AUM. AUM is followed by the fourth, silence. Atman, the self has three states, waking, dream, dreamless, the fourth is Turiya. This Turiya, the fourth state where there is no superimposition, is the same as Brahman which has no transformation in the form of this world, in the form of this subtle world, and in the form of this God. This will be explained farther. I am just trying to give you the picture, the overall picture of the whole thing.

This Turiya as we mentioned, is pure consciousness and hence it is the best way to express Turiya as silence. Silence is the only way. So Atman has no parts, never has any parts, and the goal and purpose of Turiya is a state of silence. This is not a silence, as we commonly understand, like. when we become silent and we are not speaking any word. When we are talking of SILENCE that follows AUM with each letter in capital. This is when all the words

have been exhausted. The goal of Vedanta is to reach that state.
While discussing AUM, we had mentioned how Swami Vivekananda also says that when a Yogi goes into meditation, the last thing he hears is the undulated sound AUM. It sounds like a Gong. And when you return from that state of Samadhi, the first thing you become aware of is AUM. Aum is the universe. The silence beyond that is pure existence, you call it Brahman, call it Atman, call it God, does not matter. The idea has to be understood. So, in these three states, that is waking, dream and dreamless, the mind is aware. I know I am awake, when I dream my mind is aware. I know I am awake when I dream and later I know I dreamt. When I am in dreamless sleep, deep sleep, when I come out of it , I know, oh I slept so well that I remember nothing. Also full of Bliss.
But for Turiya, you cannot be aware of it. Because the mind itself goes still. In ordinary silence, the mind is still working, you don't have external sound, but you have internal sound. When we say that silence that follows AUM mind is completely stilled, and all mental activities have gone totally silent. So Turiya cannot be understood by mind. It is not the normal silence, where we are just not talking. This silence is Turiya. You can only be one with Turiya, because you are Turiya .
Waking state is the state of becoming. In dream, you become something as we can see, and dreamless you become something, not Turiya. You become aware of the waking state, you become aware of the dream state, you also become aware of the dreamless state. But, you don't become aware of Turiya, the fourth. This in brief is the four states and only by the study of the three states, that is waking, dream and dreamless, when you study these well, when you understand these well, then you get an idea of the fourth. And that is where mantra number 3, 4, 5, these three will be explaining the three states. What is the waking state, what is a dream state and what is a dreamless state. And to remind you they are not forcing these ideas on us. They are just explaining the obvious. Once you can understand what these three states are, how they are related, with each other, then you realise that oh! These three are leading us to the fourth, which is Turiya. The goal of Vedanta is Turiya. This Turiya is the silence, this Turiya is AUM, that is silence that follows AUM and this Turiya is Atman which has no superimposition, and this Turiya is Brahman which has no superimposition,that is the mask. This we will take up , what exactly is the waking state, How Atman behaves in that waking state, How Atman as if gets transformed, actually it does not get transformed, it gets the superimposition. And it experiences the external world through its various openings.
To summarise, whatever is there, there is only Brahman, as the sages saw and see in meditation, and because we cannot understand Brahman, we talk about the self Atman. This Atman is one with Brahman. This Atman has four states, these four states, are not real, not intrinsic, but imagined.

5. Jagrat - Soul during the Waking State

Mandukya Karika is a very difficult work. I will tell you two very interesting stories to illustrate this.

I knew of one highly respected monk, not of Ramakrishna Mission in Haridwar. I heard this story and have met this monk. One of our Swamijis, He was also very respected. He wanted to give him a book to read. And that Swamiji was pucca Vedantin. And he told our senior monk, look, I have read three books in my life. I continue reading those three books, I don't want to read any more books. And these books are Jagrat, Swapna and Sushupti,- waking, dreaming and dreamless. This is what we are discussing here. So this one simple story will give you an idea, how subtle this study of Mandukya Karika must be. That here was a learned monk. He was no ordinary monk. If you talk to him, you know how learned he was. He was not ready to read any book. Because he felt that, he was going to read these three books only. Three books of life. The waking, the dream and the dreamless, which we were discussing now.

The second very interesting thing is about micro and macro and Swami Vivekananda who was well aware of this.

There is a very famous Sanskrit expression “Yat Bramhande, Tat Pindande”. Micro and macro are the same, Individual and universal are the same, built on the same plan. That is creation is more like a fractal, where the pattern is repeating. That is why there is a famous saying “ History repeats itself”. All these repeat, in a different form. Ideas will remain the same.

After the Mahasamadhi of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda and his brother disciples were moving around India. Once Swamiji was near Almora, and there he was meditating under a peepal tree. One of his brother disciples was there. Suddenly Swamiji got up and embraced his brother disciples with enthusiasm telling that Brother, have realised a great truth that micro and macro are built on the same plan. People in India have known this fact for millenia, thousands and thousands of years. Go to any Vedantin, they will just spit these words like a parrot. It is interesting to note that even Swami Vivekananda needed to meditate and then discover and be firm about this truth. Knowing things theoretically is one thing and understanding them is an entirely different thing.

Today, thanks to Google information is freely available whatever information one wants. In earlier days information was king. Anyone who had the information was the king.

But nowadays, knowledge is the king. Swami Vivekananda had very famously said. from the day of advent of Shri Ramakrishna, Satya Yuga has begun. Satya Yuga, the golden age,

Golden age implies the age of knowledge and wisdom. It is not the age of information. Anyone who is running after this information through computers will be left behind. Because the same information is available to everyone else. Doctors are complaining that when the patients come, the moment the Doctor says something, the patient starts googling things and finding out whether or not the doctor is correct. The patient gets information, but has no knowledge of medical science and therefore is not in a position to understand the doctor's treatment and Google sure cannot replace a doctor.

We need to move deeper and reach the truth. Which means that the realisations the sages had, the realisations that Swami Vivekananda had, we also need to have. To understand the Upanishads, we need to be contemplative. The Upanishads are not books of information. You need to be contemplative.

In the previous chapter we mentioned how Atman is described as having four quarters. And we detailed that these four quarters are not like four separate legs of a chair or a cow. They are kind of imagined, they are kind of superimposed, as in the four quarters of a coin. Now we discuss one quarter after another. First we shall discuss the three quarters, waking dream and dreamless. And then famous Gaudapadas Karika will come. Just to remind, Karika means explanation in verses. Upanishads are the truths that are passed on from generation to generation. Truths that were realised by the sages, maintained by the disciples. Sometimes these Upanishads need explanation, because you see, when we were kids, even the simplest poems, the poems at which we laugh today, they needed explanation. And we had to write examinations, explain these lines with context, whatever might that mean. No wonder I had difficulty passing examinations. If that is the plight of ordinary poetry, what to speak of the upanishads. Upanishads have the statements that we are to realise in the depth of meditations.

There are certain things we need to keep in mind. First, everything we study in the Upanishads are not thought out systems. These are not mere philosophies. These are plain truths. They are not axiomatic. Axiomatic means which is self-evident or unquestionable. For example, when Einstein constructed his famous theory of relativity, he took the axiomatic truth that nothing can travel faster than light. It is an observed truth. Observed truth may change. That means there might be some particles, in some part of the universe, that could travel faster than light. Maybe , maybe not. However, what the Upanishads discuss are entirely different things. These are spiritual truths, which are known when one has gone into contemplative silence and from there gone deeper and stilled the mind. When one stills the mind, how can one know something? That is very difficult. So when one stills the mind, one knows one's true nature.

Once the true nature is known, and when one comes back, one sees the universe in an entirely different light. We shall discuss these three states, in line with Mandukya Upanishad,

Gaudapada's Karika on it and Shankaracharya's commentary on both the Upanishad and the Karika.

Just an overview. We are all aware of the two states. The waking and the dream state. Generally we don't know about the dreamless state, as I mentioned in the previous talk that we don't even have a special term in English for the dreamless state. But in India everybody knows about Sushupti. Sushupti is very deep sleep, so much so as if no sense is there.

In Hindi there are phrases and Idioms in Hindi on Sushuptabastha. Sometimes it is taunted, Sarkar sushuptabastha me thi..Government was in deep sleep. Deep Sleep means where there is no awareness of anything in any form. Just look at the culture where the third state, the dreamless state has entered the common lexicon, for which English does not even have a word. Just imagine.

Waking state is something we are well aware of and we know that our five senses take in and five other senses react. You take the world through five senses and you act on the world through organs of action. That is ten. Mind is the eleventh. Mind is more subtle than all these.

Then there is Dream state. It is very difficult to understand. I am personally fascinated by these dreams. We can mention Freud and his books on dreams. Almost all his interpretations ended either with sex or with violence. Those of you, who are interested in psychology and neurology, you will be knowing that scientists are still trying to find out what exactly dreams are made up of . What are dreams? Things like that.

Upanishads do not go into any of the details that modern science goes into and yet in one sentence it sums up its observation because the goal of the Upanishads is not to explain the dream state, but to discuss Atman. This is one serious problem that people have. Those who listen to our talks on religion, and then try to compare religion with science, they forget that it is not the job of religion to explain the world. It is the job of science. How can we get into it? The little that religion talks about this world, the little it talks about you, me and etc, it is just to have a foothold and from there it catches hold of us, because we understand our body, we understand our mind, we understand our being, we understand this world. And then, it takes us upward. The goal of religion is not to explain this body. The goal of religion is to not even to explain the mind. And definitely the role of religion is not to explain the world.

Shankaracharya repeatedly comments, anything that can be known through senses and the mind, even if a scripture has a thousand statements to its contrary, these are not to be accepted.

Waking the state is the measure of everything. It is in the waking state that you know about your dream state. It is the waking state where you know about the dreamless state, where you say that I slept so well that I remember nothing. And it is in the waking state that you know about what you achieved during meditation. It is in the waking state that you know

about your realisations. So waking state is not only important, it is the most important, most vital of the states. Whether you go to the meditative state or dream state, the king is the waking state. The reason is very simple. You are not aware of the waking state during your dreamless state, but in the waking state you know that.

See a few days ago there was an incident during one of our talks. We have all these young ones who are all knowing and he commented that you are kind of a snob (Ahankar). You consider a learned person superior to a farmer. Indeed I do, It is a fact. Society never runs on equality. Society always runs on inequality. Real equality lies only in the spiritual state. Inequality is not only the law of life, it is the fundamental fact of life.

Somebody had written one of those stupid statements in very abusive language. He had written, why don't you Gurus sit together and find out a single path and say very clearly what is right and what is truth about God and what is the truth about religion? I am not a Guru, I just explain the scriptures as I learned from my teachers. I don't claim any wisdom for myself. And I replied, we don't live in the same home, we don't eat the same food. We don't study the same subjects. We don't have the same wife. Why do you want the same truth in religion? This is what happens in India. Everyone is ready to give a sermon, everyone is sermonising. And if you ask them what is your basis, what is your locus standi, you will find that they do not have one.

This is not how discussions go on and this is not how you learn.

The idea is that you need to understand what these scriptures are telling. No doubt meditation is a great state but Dualists criticise Advaits on this point even though there is your Nirvikalpa Samadhi, you have to come back lower to know that. You need to understand that fundamental difference between meditative state and waking state, as with a learned person and a farmer.

The difference between a learned person and a farmer lies in the fact that , a scholar if need be can be a farmer. A farmer cannot be a knowledgeable person. Much more importantly, which is the ultimate test of a thing. A labourer aspires to be a scholar. A poor man aspires to be a rich person. A rich person never aspires to be poor. Which means wealth is superior to poverty. Knowledge is superior to ignorance. A scholar is superior to a labourer. Simply, the difference lies in aspirations. Now sannyasi is superior in India. Why? Because even kings aspire to give up everything and become a monk. And a true sannyasi in general, we are not talking about those who have become monks out of compulsion, never wants to go back to the world. But many in the world want to become monks. That shows the superiority, that which everyone aspires to.

During the waking state we aspire to meditate. We aspire to have the knowledge of Nirvikalpa Samadhi. That is why it is superior. However, the measure of that comes only in the waking state. That is why waking state is extremely important. We won't survive if we

don't have deep sleep. Nowadays those of you who have done some study on dreams etc., would know that there are sleep psychologists who are continuously trying to measure things, whether we have sleep apnea, whether we have this problem or that problem. They say that sleep hours do not matter. Quality of sleep matters. Simple thing. In our terms, it is sushupti that matters. Depending on how much sushupti you have, so much of rest you have. If you sleeping for long, you will have longer stretches of dream. If you have longer stretches of dream, it will tire you further. If you are sleeping more than that is required, you will be dreaming more. And dream is also a state of activity.

It is during deep sleep that there is no activity. And that is why you get full rest. These are the three states, Waking where we take in the world through our external senses, Dream state, where the impressions that we have taken from the external world and impressions that we have through our imaginations, through our memory etc., create a new world. Actually waking is also a created world. And then there is dreamless state, where all these activities stop. We shall be discussing that.

So, what the Upanishad says is that, Atman that is identified with the individual body, say me, in your case, you, and the Atman that is identified with the cosmic body, experiences this waking state. Similarly there is a state of soul that experiences Dream and then there is that experiences Dreamless. And from there the Upanishad will go on to show how this Atman which has four states, not actual states but apparent, are actually one. And that Atman alone exists. Here I also like to mention, though it is not really given in that sense, but just for you to keep in mind, whenever we talk about the body, that is external or internal, we talk about three things. One is gross (Sthula) , second is Subtle (Sukshma) and Causal (ideational, which is Karan Jagat). Sthul, Sukshma, Karan, these are also related to these three states of waking, dream and dreamless. We will be discussing more of this as we proceed.

I just gave you an idea that we are well aware of two states, waking and dream, and there is also dreamless, which is characterised by the idea that I remembered nothing, and yet the sense that “I” was there persists.

So with that we are going to begin mantra no three of Mandukya Upanishad.

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जागरितस्थानो बहिष्प्रज्ञः सप्ताङ्ग एकोनविंशतिमुखः

स्थुलभुग्वैनरः प्रथमः पादः (Mantra 3)

The first quarter of atman (pada) is Vaisvaanara whose sphere (of activity) is waking state, who is conscious of external objects, who has seven limbs, and nineteen mouths, and whose experience consists of gross (material objects)

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Swami Nikhilananda’s book is the best book on Mandukya Upanishad . No other book is

near his. Those who want to study what Shankaracharya has written directly, do refer to Swami Gambhiranandaji's work.

Atman is being seen as quarters. Here the first quarter is being discussed. The first quarter of Atman, the quarter with which we are most familiar, i.e Jagrat or Waking, is Vaisvanara. Vaisvanara is also called Visva. Both terms are used. Upanishads are very old, so naturally there are many words for that. Vaisvanara sphere of activity is the waking state, the first quarter. Atman is being seen as quarter.

Actually it is the pure Atman, but this pure Atman can never identify with anything. Because pure Atman is like infinite sky. It can never identify itself with anything. But for some strange reason, of which no one has any answer, for reasons unknown, God wills "I am one, I will be many". This willing is known as ignorance. Now those who have devotional tendencies, they don't want to accept that this can be ajnana , this can be mithya, this can be maya. But this is a fact. Ajnana, Maya, Mithya, means when one appears as many. Because there is only one and yet it now appears as many.

This is known as Bhranti Darshan. Bhranti Darshan means wrong perception. Wrong perception why? Actually it is one, but it appears as many. So when we say, as in Christianity, God said let there be light, He willed. This willing is known as Maya. Why should God will? In fact Mandukya Karika is going to trash these ideas like anything and they are so funny to read.

This is the first quarter. We mentioned how micro and macro are built on the same plan. There are three quarters and the first quarter is Vaisvanara or Visva.

The second quarter is known as Taijasa (dream state). The third quarter is Prajna (Dreamless state). These are technical terms. These terms are applicable in micro.

In the macro, i.e. universal you have a corresponding reality. Virat, Hiranyagarva, also known as Ishwara. So when they talk about God in various religions, they actually correspond to Ishwara and beyond this is Avyakrita.

The fourth one is Turiya at the individual level and Brahman at the cosmic level.

Those of you who are interested will be coming to these terms later. But just to give you a complete picture these words are mentioned - . Vaisvanara, Taijasa, Prajna, Virat, Hiranyagarva, Avyakrita.

The fourth is Turiya at individual level and Brahman at Cosmic Level. Ref table at the end of this chapter.

In our Upanishads, both the terms, Hiranyagarbha and Ishwara are used for this,

So now in both these cases, whether it is individual i.e. Vaisvanara or universal i.e. Virat, in both cases ignorance, Avidya is at play. The reality is Brahman.

Yet, for that mysterious reason, where from this Avidya comes no one knows. But if you are seeing multiplicity, you are under Avidya. You may be a great devotee, you may claim

yourself to be a great devotee, you may claim yourself to be enlightened, you may do this or do that, and like Communists and Socialist you may say that we are one. But, if you are seeing multiplicity, you are under maya. You can simply test if you are under Maya or not. Do you see multiplicity? Just give a person a pin prick , a needle prick, and see if the person screams. If he screams, he knows multiplicity. And if he knows multiplicity, he is under maya. In Vedanta we don't discuss big things. We are not high on ideologies, and low on practicality. We Vedantins have one and only one approach. Truth. This is the truth, this is the ideal, this is the practical.

Jagarita-sthano bahis-prajnah, this is the first. This is very interesting. This is first because, see, it takes you to subsequent quarters that is dream and dreamless. Moreover it is the waking state that knows the other states. The dreamless does not know dream and waking. Dream does not know the dreamless and waking. But waking knows and that is why it is referred to as the first. And that is why human life is very important. Because, it is in human life you know very clearly that you are in the waking state.

By the way, Meditation is not a state according to Upanishad. And samadhi is not a state. States are only three, waking dream and Dreamless

Sometimes you may feel that I am explaining too much. When I was studying Mandukya Karika, way back in 1986-87, I was fascinated no doubt, But as I look back, I find I understood nothing then.

It has taken years of evolution, really years of evolution that has helped me to succeed in understanding. Dear readers, you are mature and experienced. So you understand more easily. But the subject requires contemplation and re-readings.

Thus in the first state, i.e.awaken, Jagrat, it knows all other states, and it also knows meditation. When we say meditative state, it is not a state the way dream state is a state according to Mandukya Upanishad. According to some other works it might be. But not according to Mandukya. In this state, Atman identifies itself with gross body and every experience this gross body has (bahisprajna) . But as I mentioned,Atman cannot identify itself with anything. This is the superimposition that is when you see a rope in darkness, you superimpose a snake , depending on your fears, depending on your aspirations.

Swami Bhuteshnandaji Maharaj was president of Ramakrishna Mission. He was a very learned person and one of those great persons in whom the knowledge aspect of Vedanta and Bhakti aspect of Vedanta played in the same tune. The greatest achievement for me in my monastic life has been to see these great monks and touch their feet. That is the only achievement I had till date. I recollect one of Bhuteshanandaji's favourite stories. Story of Laila and Majnu. In that famous story of Laila and Majnu, where Majnu was infatuated by Laila. And there was tribal warfare and ultimately the King brought both Laila and Majnu. According to Bhuteshanandaji's story, Laila was not good looking, but Majnu was. So the

King says , Majnu, you are creating the war because of this ordinary looking girl. And Majnu said, Jahanpana! Oh emperor! Don't look at Laila with your eyes, look at Laila with my eyes. You have your hopes , you have your fears, you have your aspirations, your feelings are your own, like the tentacles of an octopus, they go out to surround the object and you become one. In the process you don't realise that, you paint that object with your own emotions and then test. For example, there is rope in the darkness and your fear goes out and gives a thorough coat of fear on that rope. And you start testing the fear of a snake in a rope.

You love someone, as there is plenty of love inside you. A young man chasing a girl in a college, has too much love inside him. And his love goes outside and surrounds. However once he becomes a husband he does not behave like that. Why? Now his sense of responsibility goes out and surrounds everyone. And he sees things as responsibility. A young lady behaves in one way and when she becomes a mom, she behaves in a different way. Why? Nothing changes. It is the inner emotions that go out and surround that person or that object and paint it thoroughly and test accordingly.

If you can understand this, it will be easy for you to understand Vedanta. So it says, here Atman identifies itself with the experience. Who is experiencer will be clear in the next few paragraphs. Those of you who are more interested, I would request you to listen to our Raja Yoga Talks in English which we completed some time back.

Under normal conditions of the lecture surrounding, here is this world, here is this microphone, data comes from this microphone, hits my eyes, my brain reacts. But the mind cannot know, because the mind is inert.

In Raja Yog they put forth many arguments to understand if the mind is fundamental. If the mind was something fundamental, then it would not have evolved from childhood to old age. Mind is continuously evolving, so it cannot be fundamental. Here we are in search of something which is fundamental. And when you say fundamental, it implies something that does not change. When you say fundamentalist, it means ideas do not change. You can make many changes in the building, you cannot change the foundation.

The fundamentals, search for the fundamental, that is Atman, that which never changes. Mind changes. Mind cannot be conscious. This is the argument that they use, but more important than that, the sages who went into depths of meditation, realised that mind is not the ultimate consciousness. Why? Because only when they could get out of mind, they could understand. What is meant by getting out of mind? It is just like deep sleep in which we remember nothing, and the mind stops functioning. But when they come back the “I”ness and your stupidity returns.

What is the difference between Deep Sleep and Samadhi? They are similar. In deep sleep also, the mind stops functioning and when you come out, the sense of “I” remains.

Something similar happens in Samadhi. The mind stops functioning but the sense of identity remains. But a fool going into deep sleep comes out the same fool. A fool, entering into Samadhi, returns a wise person. That is the difference. Everything changes.

The aspect of Atman that identifies itself with mind, is Jivatma.But here we shall not use the term, Jivatma, We shall simply say that Atman has four quarters. The approach of Mandukya Upanishad is entirely different. See, the normal understanding of Upanishad and Vedanta, are not that. It is entirely different.

So that Atman has four quarters, the first quarter is that which identifies itself with the waking state. What is the speciality of this waking state and Atman which is identifying with the experiencer, is Sthul Bhuk. Sthul means gross and Bhuk means one who takes in. So it is conscious of the external objects. It does not matter how many elements are there in this world and how many fundamental subatomic particles are there. What is very important for us is that as far as I am concerned, I take in this world through my five senses. And that is why , Hindu system of thought will say that this whole universe is composed of the five. Shabda, Sparsh, Rup, Rasa, Gandha i.e., Sound, Touch Sight, Taste and Smell respectively. These are the five that we have as the senses.

Here is my pen, this pen has a certain colour, certain touch, certain fragrance and the combined data of all these gives me the idea of a pen. Sthul Bhuk. These experiences make things absolutely simple. Atman in one of its states experiences the external world. That is the simplest thing.

More importantly, Atman is aware of the objects, other than itself. That means I see things outside me. I am seeing this pen outside me. I see the world outside me. I see all these stars and galaxies, everything outside me. I can see everything outside me, unlike in dream state . In the dream state you see things inside you unlike in the waking state.

So, only when you realise Atman, only then you understand this non-duality of existence. Right now we have duality of existence. This duality of existence is the hallmark, the characteristic of these states of Atman and in waking state, we are fully aware and absolutely aware of the duality.

It is only when you have experience of Samadhi that you know the non-dual nature of Atman. So, these dualist schools, whether they be religion or be they philosophies, they essentially talk of the obvious. So, what Vedanta says is that, if you go into deep, you will see that these material objects, actually do not have any independent existence. And this is Maya. If you read the first chapter on Vedanta, there we have mentioned, that ultimately it is pure existence that is one that appears to us as many. So, it is Sthul Bhuk. Although see what happens in the ultimate analysis at the highest level, Atman experiences Atman only. Now Atman experiences the Sat, the existence aspect of itself. And Atman experiences the multiplicity of existence. When I am seeing these two things, the pen and this microphone, I

am seeing two different things. In essence I am experiencing only existence as both microphone and pen. And what is existence ? it is same as consciousness, it is same as Bliss.Please read the first chapter on Vedanta. That means, Atman actually always experiences only Atman. Yet it seems to be experiencing all this multiplicity. This is Maya. And you require Samadhi to understand this. No amount of learning, no amount of worship, no amount of action, no amount of social service can break this. Only when one has Samadhi, this illusion is broken down.

Jagarita Sthano bahisprajna saptanga , saptanga means seven limbs. This body has seven limbs. Actually they have been taken from different Upanishads, just mentioned according to them, we have this head, and eyes taken as one, then mouth, and the prana, the vital things that move inside and we have the middle part and then we have kidney and then we have feet. These seven are known as the limbs. Limbs of the individual body. To summarise, the seven limbs are, head, eyes, mouth, prana, middle part resembling torso, kidney and feet.

As we mentioned that micro and macro are same, so Vaishvanara and Virat are same. Vaisvanara is the individual state of Atman, identified with this body and and when you have this cosmic body, even Atman is identifying itself with the cosmic body, the sumtotal of all the bodies. It also has seven limbs. These seven limbs are known as heavens. Highest heavens. Sun, fire, Air, Akash i.e., Space, Heavens is Dyulok, ie subtle, water and earth.

Now the question is how they came up with this? That the cosmic body that is God as we understand as these seven parts. Well these come from Vedas and these come from other Upanishads. And sages have said so and there is no proof of it, proof in the sense that we understand, and sometimes I say that, the way you know your body, you have to imagine, think of God having as a body so that you can meditate upon him and then reach the fourth state. Here let me remind you once again, description of the body, individual or cosmic is not the goal of Upanishad. The goal is to make use of this and take us to the fourth. That is Turiya, that is Brahman.

So, instead of seven, suppose tomorrow somebody comes and says there are eleven limbs, that is not going to affect the Upanishad, because the goal is something different. This is something you need to keep in mind.

Then it says, ekonovingshati mukhah; meaning it has nineteen mouths or openings, nineteen apertures through which they take this world. They say that Ten indriyas, ten organs we have through which we take in the world. Five pranas, Prana the vital energy that works inside us, if we get the chance we shall describe these., prana apana udana samana & vyana. They have different kinds of functions inside the body, five prana and four states of mind, chitta, mana, buddhi, ahankar. So ten Indriyas, five Pranas and four minds make it Nineteen.

When the mind acts as data collector, it just goes on collecting data, it is known as Chitta.

And when it is sifting data, pigeon holing, is known as mind (mana) and data fixing is buddhi and when it identifies itself it is Ahankar. The difference between Computer and the human mind lies here. Computers will do these three. Collect data, organise the data and fix the data. Not the identification. Mind identifies. Now, Atman who is the subject of discussion. It experiences this world through these nineteen. And that is why, if one of your prana, one of your inner functions is weak, the whole thing goes wrong completely. So basically this discussion is meant to show that both the objective world and the subjective world are illusory in nature.

It is only the Atman that keeps on experiencing this external world through saptanga , seven limbs, ek-unvingshati mukhah, nineteen mouths which are basically openings. Seven limbs , nineteen mouths. So the body has nineteen mouths, not the way we understand, and is entirely in a different way, that is ten senses, and ten organs, five prana and four functions of the mind. So through this nineteen we know this world. And there is a very important comment by Acharya Shankar , let me just mention it as that will complete it.

Objection is raised that, if you are discussing Atman, then why bring in this cosmic form? Why say that cosmic form, whatever you have Virat, also has these things? Acharya says in his commentary, extremely important thing , that if it is not said, if the Upanishad do not mention that the micro and the macro are built on the same plan and that, the macro that is Virat also has seven limbs, nineteen mouths, then the concept of Atman in the Upanishads, will become similar to the concept of Atman in Sankhya philosophy. According to Sankhya philosophy, we have multiplicity of Atman and this multiplicity of Atman means I have one Atman, you have one Atman, he has one Atman, which is the common understanding that we all have about Atman that we are all different. But Advait is different. When you say that, it is the Atman that experiences this external world, through seven limbs and nineteen mouths, you are sticking with Sankhya till now, The moment you say that, same Atman is experiencing this whole universe, this cosmic universe, and the experiencer of cosmic experience too has this same kind of body. Vedanta makes itself free from every other system of philosophy.

As mentioned earlier Upanishads should not be questioned. We have discussed why these sages should not be questioned and we will discuss it again. Here we are trying to place the entire thing systematically and also logically. First, they say that we are all aware of our waking state. Now while explaining the waking state, the upanishad say that although it appears as if the body is reacting, senses are reacting, mind is reacting, but they will not be able to react unless there is Atman behind it. So when a person is dead his body mind does not work. When Atman is holding on to the body, and yet the brain has been shut down, there is no functioning. Which means that mind is the intermediary, it creates that interface, between world and Atman. So if you really want to interact with this world, under normal

conditions you have to have Atman, which identifies with a body and mind. If it does not identify with the body, then it is pure Atman. It will not be able to take in the world. It has to identify with the mind, mind works with the senses, senses work through the body and body acts on the world. This is the process.

And the waking state is very important because it is in the waking state that we realise that we have been dreaming or we had a dreamless state. We also know about our spiritual realisations and we talk about the highest of the samadhi, Nirvikalpa samadhi, in the waking state. If the waking state were not there we would have never known that Sri Ramakrishna had Nirvikalpa samadhi. So waking state is extremely important. It is so important that Acharya Shankar repeatedly says in his commentaries that even if there be hundred statements in scriptures, talking of something, but that is conflicted by direct perception then words of the scriptures are not to be taken. This is the importance of waking.

States of Atman			
State		**Micro**	**Macro**
State 1	Waking or Jagrat	Vaisvanara / Visva	Virat
State 2	Dream or Swapna	Taijasa	Hiranyagarbha, Ishwara
State 3	Dreamless or Sushupti	Prajna	Avyakrita
State 4	Turiya	Turiya	Brahman

6. Swapna - Dream State

A Little recapitulation

The subject we are studying is subtle. The best way to understand such a subject is often re-reading, if required multiple times. So let us recapitulate a bit. We have however tried to maintain simplest language, but the subject is subtle

Max Mueller wrote about Vedas and the Upanishads, particularly the Upanishads, that these sages went to those heights where the lungs of ordinary mortals would burst as the air is very rarefied. These sages are talking about ideas, they belong to extremely rarefied people. So such a comparison.

Here in this world, the ideas are extremely gross. Even when you read stories of Ramayan ,

Mahabharat etc., and of course other religious texts, they are at best subtle. But when it comes to Upanishad, they are simply sublime.

To understand Upanishad, one has to rise to a great mental and intellectual height. Upanishads have always been for a chosen few. Throughout history the Veda Mantras were chanted by the Brahmins and the priests and even by the commoners. But not the Upanishads. Because Upanishads call for an extremely refined mind. Therefore Upanishads require repeated reading and repeated listening from competent teachers.

Many get attracted to Mandukya Karika because of the prestige and glamour associated with it. But unless there is true seeking of knowledge, it is difficult to grasp. Just listening to popular talk on the net will not help. It has to be learnt the hard way.

Upanishads are not a theory. Upanishads are the truth. Also, no one is forced to accept this truth. Unlike Christianity or Islam, where whatever is there in the book, you have to accept. It is not so for Upanishads.

Those of you who have studied the life of Sri Ramakrishna, know very well how he went for Mother Kali, and then Totapuri came and then he had his realisation of Advaita. God incarnated as Sri Ramakrishna. This time God was not a warrior. He was not a diplomat. He was not a silent preacher like Buddha. He came as a typical devotee. He has shown how a Devotee can grow, who is not into scriptures, without formal education. Can he reach the highest? Yes. and then he left his copy Swami Advutanandajee, Latu Maharaj, who was like Sri Ramakrishna, illiterate and not learned in scriptures, and yet he reached up to the level of Samadhi.

Now what exactly one sees in Samadhi. It is an undivided mass of consciousness which means only consciousness is there nothing else. There is no division into it. No division whatsoever. Solid mass and it is conscious and because it is conscious, it is love and it exists. This is known as Satchidananda. But the general term is Atman or Brahman depending on from what perspective you are talking. If you are talking from the perspective of Cosmos, it is Brahman. If you are talking from the standpoint of the individual , it is Atman.

So, these sages, not one, two or three, but many. Unlike Christianity, there is Jesus and after that there is completely blank. Hinduism does not run that way. First they will say I have realised it, you too can realise it. Then they will give names for example if you study Ishopanishad, we have these talks, you can listen to them. Where clearly the teacher is telling us we learned from our teachers so there is a tradition. In Mundakopanishad, they will go on listing that it came in such and such tradition which means that there were many who realised this. If you look at India, if you look at Indian traditions, you will see that there are many who have realised all these. When Sri Ramakrishna came, we could see, Oh yes, whatever we have heard in our spiritual history, which are not tales of fancy or fantasy. These are the truths.

But how do you explain this world then?
We great sages, even a person like Nachiketa, a young boy, went to Yam Raj in Kathopanishad. And he learned the secret of Atman. And continuing the tradition, we had Totapuri and Sri Ramakrishna. So tradition runs, Sage after sage has come who has told us.
But why do we see multiplicity? So many objects. If we say that reality is a mass of consciousness then from where comes this multiplicity. If God was happy with himself, why did he create this universe? This is a very serious question.
The answer is that it is God's will that creation took place. Swami Vivekananda beautifully says that, when you say God's will, you simply mean to say that you don't have the answer. Well that is the truth.
What Vedanta says is that there is no answer to this question as it is an irrational question, as these questions belong to the mind. Consciousness is completely beyond mind. Either you have experienced it, or you have not experienced it. If you have experienced it, you know. If you have not experienced it, nobody can make you know about it. Definitely not me. Not even Sri Ramakrishna can make you understand. Just in no way. Either you know it, or you don't know it.
Sri Ramakrishna very beautifully said, you cannot understand the enjoyment of a husband and wife to a five year old girl. One cannot. The enjoyment of a couple cannot be explained to a five year old girl. Even if you want to, you cannot. Then why do we need to study a subject which I cannot understand?
It is not that it cannot be understood. Here in Hinduisms there is nothing like that so and so has been the last prophet and there cannot be any more. Here it says if those sages, Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda could do it, you too can. This we have already said earlier.
Why should I do it? Because, all our problems, all our pains, all our burnings, all your sufferings are rooted in this world. Once you know who truly you are, you will get out of all this pain.
That is why Hinduism does not convert. At least till the other day. Reason being they said, if you are in pain , suffering , come to me I will teach you what to do. But if you say, I am fine, I am enjoying a grand life, continue, go ahead. If you are happy with your wine, and gold go on. Keep on enjoying, keep on suffering.
When Swami Vivekananda was in America, he was talking to the group, class talks. He was talking about Atman and Brahman, when one old lady got up and said, Swami, I see my true image in my golden jewellery. That is real for me. Swamiji beautifully said that she should continue that path, for as many births as possible, till she gets disillusioned and understands this world has nothing. Then, only then will she be ready to walk this path.
People who are enjoying this path, simply cannot be made to understand this. No amount of

convincing will help. One will just be termed a crazy person, by trying to convince such a person. Understanding comes, when there is a genuine need to understand and the unhappiness of the world appears before the person.

There are a large number of beggars in India. The Supreme Court, in a recent ruling has said, it is an elitist stand point to think that there should be no beggars and begging can be stopped. India is a land of Buddha, a spiritual beggar, a mendicant. Every Sannyasi, on becoming a Sannyasi has to beg, This author too had to beg for three days when he became a Ramakrishna Mission Monk. This is mandatory for the Hindu Monks. It is sheer hypocrisy to think this land, which adores Sannaysa, which adores Buddha, will ban begging. Even ordinary beggars don't want to give up their begging bowls, what to say about people who have some amount of luxury and enjoyment. They will never give up. Blessed are the people who try to read and listen to these scriptures. Nowadays we have talks on YouTube. Earlier there were classes. People had to come from various corners of the city in heat and rain. Blessed are those people. Hinduism believes in all this; “You can do it if you try”. We can show the way.
To know about Atman, the problem is of so called rationality , the problem of so called scientific attitude. These belong to the realm of mind. And Atman is absolutely beyond it. Forget about me, even Buddha cannot make you understand. Sri Krishna cannot make you understand what Atman is. It took 700 verses to explain this in Geeta. Either you know it or you don't know it.
To make sure that tradition of Vedic Rishis does not die, they had a Guru disciple tradition, where the Disciples maintained the knowledge even if they did not understand it. Because a time may come when a competent disciple may come and who may want to know what these are.
I belong to that tradition, I belong to the tradition which is trying to maintain this Indian Spiritual traditions, Indian spiritual heritage, because some day, some of the listeners and readers , u may come and want to know this.

How this Atman becomes this world cannot be explained. Why it becomes, cannot be explained. But we can tell you how to understand.
This mass of consciousness was experienced by sages and great Acharyas (teachars) . Call them prophet, call them sage, or by any name, in the depth of meditation, they realised that mass of consciousness is the ultimate truth. When they come back from meditation, they actually do not see multiplicity, though others see it.
When a disciple says that he is suffering or simply wants to learn how to reach that stage of meditation and realise. The teacher cannot really explain how one becomes multiple, but he

can teach the way to understand that there is no multiplicity. He cannot explain, but shows the way to understand. This is the most important point. This is the crux of Vedanta. Vedanta does not explain why or how about creation. There are some theories, but that is not so important. That is why Vedanta brings in the concept of Maya, which is divine ignorance. But Vedanta can teach, at least theoretically, how to get rid of multiplicity.
This is what Mandukya Karika and every upanishad does.
Who can go for this learning? Those who are really curious, those who really want to know, most importantly those who are fed up with this world. For example, me. I am totally fed up with this world. Of course I don't have that power to rise above. I take that nothing in this world interests me. Such a boring place. An absolutely boring place.
So when Upanishad starts teaching, the first thing they will say is that there is no multiplicity, which means Atman is Brahman. Atman is an individual and Brahman is the cosmic. There is absolutely no difference, no distinction between Atman and Brahman.
This is very special about Upanishad. Ramayan, Mahabharat, Puranas etc all mention creator God, His creation and that His creation is inferior to creator God. But it is not so in Vedanta.
Vedanta is not meant for faint hearted, nor it is meant for people with lack of intelligence. Vedanta requires a strong heart and great brain. Brahman is formless, a solid mass of consciousness, as we already said.But now the problem is that knowing the formless is impossible. So you cannot knowBrahman. How can you conceive something formless?
 Therefore preaching formless in religion is actually absurd.
What Upanishads do is to make us understand the unity between Atman and Brhaman. This is a very important point as it is the central reasoning process of Vedanta. For this two terms are used, Adhyaropa and Apavada, meaning superimposition and removal of it.
This is a very important technique to understand. Let us explain through examples. Suppose there is a large shop, a departmental store, only selling sugar in many forms, large granules, small granules, fine powder, candies etc. they are all kept in similar non-transparent packaging. The customers will not be able to recognise what type of sugar is in which pack. But if they are labelled, and stored in the right shelves, customers will instantly recognise them. After the customer has visited for a while, he doesn't require labels any more. He knows what is kept on a particular shelf. Labels were superimposed and now can be taken off. This is similar to the kitchen where mother knows what is kept where, She knows. But my father, who cooks rarely, does not know what is kept where. He gets confused. If the mother labels the masala boxes, it is well understood. This labelling is a superimposition. When one understands everything, labels can be removed. This is Adhyaropa and Apavada.
What the sages do is to superimpose certain things on the individual. Why individual? Because we may not understand what Brahman is. But we know ourselves, I know myself,

this body. I am Samarpananda with a head, two eyes, two hands etc. Upanishad starts exactly from this point. So if you are a true learner, you can be led from that simple point of that you have a body. And form there they pull on. And this is what they are doing here. The body is most concrete so it is so easy to lead from this point.

Now when we are explaining everything with the body at the centre, and body taking in things, being conscious of it and being conscious of the external world, it implies that it is in the waking state. This we discussed earlier

So essentially what we said is Atman is Brahman. But this cannot be understood. We therefore superimpose something and after we have understood that the whole thing is one, we take that away.

In Botany in order to take the longitudinal section of a leaf, . They are put between wax, solidified then using a razor-like machine the section is cut. Then we see it under a microscope after wax is removed. Thus we superimposed and then took away.

What Madukya Karika is doing here, is first it takes up the micro and we explained earlier how micro and macro are essentially the same. Then when Micro is understood, we can understand the macro too. That is why it is focussing on the three states. And in the final stage, superimposition from both will be removed. And then we realise that Atman is Brahman.

These are the general principles. Now here what it does is once it takes the body and the waking state, it says Atman has four states. Now let us try to understand a bit of the theory of creation according to Vedanta. That will make us understand.

If we put a dark net like plate in front of a bright light, with no other lights below or in front of that light source, we can see that one single light is coming out as hundreds and thousands of light streams, depending on the number of holes in that plate. Each of these streams will be different from each other and will appear as separate streams. But actually there is no difference. They come from the same source of light. But we are not able to understand. The number of streams will be the same as the number of holes. If the number of holes is infinite, there will be infinite streams. Though they are the same, we do not understand and we think they are different, because of Maya.

When we say that Atman has four states, which are not real but imaginary. Just like the theory of creation we said this is like a covering with holes. It is not real, It is imaginary. Because if it is something real, this can be put again again and again. That means there will never be bondage. This is imagined.

In reality Atman alone exists. But from the perspective of the word, we see the covering. And this covering is Maya

Now the moment the light is coming out of the covering, it kind of gets coloured. Imagine instead of holes there are glasses, glasses of different colours. These are known as Satva,

Rajas, Tamas. And once you have three as the primary colours, these three primary colours, you can have any number of colours in this universe. Just like that, from these qualities, Sattva, Rajas and Tamas, you can have any number of personalities. Infinite possibilities. Now this light is known as Jivatma. Technical term. Or simply Jiv. This Jiv in reality is one with the light. The ray which is coming out of the main light, through that hole is the same as that, but now it appears different. It appears different in every sense. Atman that is present within me is in reality it is Brahman. Because of superimposition, it now identifies itself with the waking state. When it identifies itself with the waking state, it is Vaishvanara. When it identifies itself with the dream state, it is known as Taijas and when it identifies itself with the deep sleep, it is known as Prajna. Thus what is at the micro, is the same as the macro level also. These we discussed earlier

There could be a question, since these states are imaginary, why do we take four only and not more? Actually there is no problem. Whatever we want to understand, four states are enough. So it is not needed. Whatever we want to understand, it is enough to have four states. As far as our body is concerned, if you are seeing Atman from the state of this body, then four states are more than enough. The goal is to show that the cosmic body of God that is Brahman appearing as in the universe and Atman appearing as in the body, in reality are the same. So these four states are more than enough.

And then the second thing is why the waking state talks about saptanga and ekono vimshati mukhah, that is, seven limbs and nineteen mouths?

Here we just need to mention that seven limbs, this idea of limb, as far as limb is concerned, can vary from tradition to tradition. That means someone may say that I will divide this body as ten limbs, some will say 5. Traditionally people have considered the body to have seven limbs. In Upanishad also they have described seven limbs.

Now the mouth is a very interesting thing. We also know about five senses, and five organs of action. This ten is very easy to understand. Do you know that scientists are saying that there are lots of internal things that we perceive. For example there is rumbling in your stomach, you are conscious of that. You are not able to breathe properly, you are conscious of that. They say these are also senses. And yet these are not senses. Science has no answer to it. Those of you who keep on talking about being scientific, they have no answer to it. We are being aware of these things. Rumbling stomach. Chest is feeling constricted, should we add these things as senses? Do understand your ancestors solved this issue thousands of years ago. And they called it Pancha Prana i.e, Five Pranas. The breath that we take, goes inside and works inside us as five vital forces. And when one's stomach rumbles it is the Prana for it. When the chest is feeling constricted, it is because of a particular prana going wrong. When one is dying there is a particular prana working. When my god friend Sean, about whom I talk when he is doing his Mahamrityunjay Japam, and

pumping up his vital energies there is a particular Prana working. And there are five Parana, Apana, Vyana, Udana and Saman. Science has not succeeded in solving these simple things. But we have known these things for thousands of years. And we are called backward!

So now we have five internal, five external and five specially internal in the form of idle breath . And there is mind which works in four different ways. It explores, it categorises etc. So that makes it nineteen. Because it has nineteen, this nineteen is attributed to the cosmic too, that is Brahman appearing in the world is God, now he is also imagined to have nineteen mouths. Because see, you are imagining things as we said, like putting labels. That makes things easy. Not that he really has.

These are all superimposed in ultimate reality. Ultimate reality appears as Shiva, ultimate reality appears as Vishnu, Ultimate reality appears as Sri Ramakrishna. Nothing wrong with it.

In Sanskrit, Names are just not an identifier of the look, it also is an indicator of its character. To recall a humorous incident, a friend of mine was furious with me for some reason. He said You are Samarpanananda! That is surrendered to God. And you are so arrogant and talk so much full of self ideas! How come you are given the name Samarpanananda? The idea is that the name and character are related.

Vaishvanara is the waking state. Acharya Shankar defines it as VishweSham Narayana anekadah Nayanat Vaishvanarah.

Waking is known as Vaishvanara. In Sanskrit, whenever a name is given, know that that name will be an indicator of its character.

The idea is that the name and character are related. Vaishvanara, Acharya Shankar defines it as Vishwe Sham Narayana anekadah Nayanat Vaishvanarah. Nayanat implies Nayan which means to carry. Also Eyes are known as Nayan. Sanskrit has many words for eyes. English has only one. And each of those words indicate a particular attribute of the eye.

Says this Jivatma, the light that we mentioned coming out from the source of light as a stream of light. It is travelling all over the universe. Universe, the seen universe , the unseen universe,. Who is carrying it? Jivatma. Because it is being carried through Vishwa, the entire creation, this is known as Vaishvanara.

One thing is that the soul keeps travelling. Rather it gets carried through the universe, Vishva, (Nayan means to carry). So it is known as Vaishvanar. And second is that the entire universe in the Vedas has been described as a human being, that is Nara. Vishva appears as Nara. Nara is human being. Vishwa is the universe. The universe appears as a human being. That is how it has been described.

Similarly when it comes to Taijas, everything is internalised. There are no more external stimuli. Taijas means lighted. Now your mind is seeing the lighted up ideas, instead of the

lighted up external objects. That is why it is known as Taijas. Word Taijas comes from Teja, which means light.

Prajna is very interesting. In Prajna it is said that Atman is silent, but knows about the past, present and future. So we have three names, Vaishvanara, Taijas and Prajna,the three states.

One more point to elaborate is the difference between Samkhya and Vedanta. This question has been asked often. Acharya Shankar answers this as if he is answering a question. The objection question is, while the four states are acceptable, why does Vedanta bring in the cosmic form? Why is it said it is the same in the cosmic form?

Acharya says, This is where Vedanta and Samkhya become different.

Samkhya and Vedanta are extremely similar. It is only at the highest level where they differ. What is that? Samkhya will say that, the soul inside every individual is unique i.e different. Something common. If I get liberation, you don't get liberation. So naturally I am separate. But Vedanta objects here. If you cover one hole, other holes will remain. Streams of light will continue. They will not stop. Why does Vedanta bring this cosmic form? It is to show that Vedanta is different from Samkhya. If it had talked only about the four states of a common man, then it might have ended up as being Samkhya. The moment brings in the cosmic form too, and says that as here Cosmic form also has three states, similarity between Individual and universal, it differs from Samkhya.

That is why it ultimately says Aham Brhamasmi, Atman is Brahman. If you do not bring in this cosmic form, then whatever has been discussed will end up being just like Samkhya. There will be no difference between Sankhya and Vedanta.

The Dream State

Now let us continue to Mantra no 4.

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स्वप्नस्थानोऽन्तःप्रज्ञः सप्ताङ्ग एकोनविंशतिमुखः

प्रविविक्तभुक्तैजसो द्वितीयः पादः (Mantra 4)

The second quarter (Pada) is the Taijasa whose sphere of activity is the dream, who is conscious of internal objects, who has seven limbs and nineteen mouths and who experiences the subtle objects.

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This is just like the previous mantra.

In this state Jivatma, the soul, continues to be active, by being conscious of the internal objects. What was external in the waking state, has now become internal objects. And just like our waking state it is endowed with seven limbs and nineteen mouths. And it is experiencer of subtle objects.

As far as dreams are concerned, we don't know what exactly dreams are. The dreams specialist, the neuro specialist, the psychologists, and the forefather of psychology Freud, in

his interpretation of dreams, do not have any answer. Vedanta has a very clear answer. And one thing good about Vedanta is whatever it says, it says with confidence. And you cannot contradict them.

So from the empirical standpoint when you are trying to understand the whole thing, we can clearly understand that there is a causal relationship between the waking state and the dream state. Interestingly in this state, the external world and the inner mental activities get thoroughly mixed up. But that is not the subject matter of this Upanishad. However we know that sense organs stay inactive in the dream state. So it has to be a mental state. It cannot be an external state. This difference is explained further below.

In Yog philosophy also this dream state is differentiated both from the waking state and from the memory. Somewhere it is in between. Yog Philosophy, Raja Yog talks of five classes of Vrittis, Pramana, which is through your waking state, Viaparyay which is false knowledge , Vikalpa - mere world play, Smriti - memory and Nidra - sleep. Now this Nidra (sleep) which includes this dream state, is a special class of Vritti, a special class of knowledge that comes to us. It is a combination of the waking state. It also has imagination. It also has mere word play in the form of thoughts. It also plays on memory. It takes in everything.

However if you go deeper, if you really go deep, you will realise that, the waking state and the dream state have a lot in common, particularly because mental activity is involved in both of them.

It is a personal experience, when you are dreaming, a mosquito comes and you are aware of that, it is beautifully woven in the dream story. Somebody comes and knocks at your door, that knocking is beautifully woven in that story. This does not happen in the dreamless state. In the dream, though the external is beautifully woven, the sense organs don't work. That means one is not taking in anything as active sense organs are not working.

Dream states are more like memories. It has more similarity with memories than the waking state. Now because the senses are not working, one cannot say that this is really the same as the waking state. It is not. It is an entirely mental state and it is an entirely mental activity. That is the difference between waking state and dream state.

Surprisingly we find that, in Indian scriptures also, sometimes it is said that some dreams are sent by the Gods. Well we all know, particularly in Christian tradition they say sign from God. So if you can have a sign from God, in the waking state, if you can have certain realisation and revelations in the waking state, you can always have visitation from “the gods” during the dream state.

Interestingly the impressions that are left on the mind, from the waking state and from the dream state, are similar.

As far as the mind is concerned, you will remember some of your dreams, even after years. Once somebody told Sri Ramakrishna that he was seeing certain kinds of dreams. Sri

Ramakrishan also told him that it is time for him to take Mantra Diksha. The kind of impressions that are left, on the mind by the waking state, similar impressions are left by the dream state.

As far as science is concerned we really don't know much what exactly this dream state is. In recent times, neuroscientists and sleep psychologists have come up with the idea that there is the waking state and there is an intermediary state where you are partly awake and partly asleep. From there you wade deeper into sleep and it is known as REM that is Rapid Eye Movement. So when there is rapid eye movement scientists say that is when we dream. And then there is non-REM sleep, there is no rapid eye movement.

According to this Upanishad, which must have been composed at least 4000 years ago,could be even 10000 years ago, what is the characteristic of this dream state? Away from this REM sleep and non-REM sleep, Sapnosthano antahprajna.- your prajna , your consciousness, that is identification of Atman, if the mind becomes inward. Saptanga ekonovimshati mukhah pravivikta-bhuk taijaso dvītiyaḥ pādah; this is the second state. So Taijas is the second quarter. These we have explained earlier. Its sphere of activity is the dream state and it is conscious of internal objects and it is endowed with seven limbs and nineteen mouths. This we explained earlier. It is an experience of the subtle objects. The Atman that identifies with the second state is Taijas.Acharya Shankar says that the mind that is active in the dream state is a mere titillation, not the real activity, it is the impressions. The expression used is "Spandan Matra", the finest of vibration. So it appears as if it is connected with the external objects, but actually it is not. Acharya Shankar explains the dream state so beautifully, that the mind which has been active in the waking state, the same mind active even now. However, the activity is the slightest, that is as little as possible vibration and appears as if it is connected with the external world. However it creates the same kind of impression , the impressions that you see in the dream state are similar to what you see in the waking state. And these states, the impressions that are created have the same properties that we have in the waking state, and what is that? Ignorance, desires, actions, where you do not know who you are? You do not know that you are Atman. This is Avidya. Because you don't know that you are Atman, you feel you are incomplete. And to bring in that completeness, you have desires. You feel you don't have wealth. You want to create wealth for yourself. You feel you need a bigger house, you feel that living alone is not good. So you need marriage. And to do all that you need to act. The more you act, more impressions are created in your mind, and the more you move away from Atman, actually you cannot move away, but as far as your mentality is concerned, you move away from the source. As you move away, your wants become more and that is why there is no end to these wants. Once you get into this vicious cycle there is no end to greed. There cannot be any end to greed.how can it be? Just not possible. Because if you fulfil your one greed, you

will create more impressions because you have worked. And those creations will create more vacuum within you. Because there is more vacuum, you want more and more. It never ends. It continues.

What is very interesting about this dream state is that it does not need the trappings of the external world. That is what is dangerous about the dream state. Yet it appears like the waking state. That is why dreams are very dangerous. They say Daydreaming. A person indulging in daydreaming is a worthless person. Why? Because it creates the same kind of sensation that we have in the waking state and yet it does not have to make an effort. And it is more powerful than mere imagination, mere thinking. This is all beautifully described by Achharya Shankar. And Atman is connected with that state of mind, where the mind is dreaming. These are the specialties of the dream state.

Now compared to other senses, the mind is nearer to Atman. Because it is the intermediary. That is why it is Swapnasthano Antahprajnah, the term is Antahprjna, because it is connected with the consciousness which is inward. And it does not require any object, it does not require any external object. So it is a mental activity. Whatever it needs, it just creates. That is why it is known as Taijas. Taijas comes from the word Tej. Tej means light. It creates its own light, and does not need any external light. And the impressions that are there in our mind, it enjoys only that. It requires no external object, no external stimuli. That is how Vedanta looks at the dream state.

7. Sushupti - The Dreamless

The Dreamless state is very important as with a proper understanding of this, we can understand the fourth state, which is the subject matter of of this Upanishad

Mantra no 5

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यत्र सुप्तो न कञ्चन कामं कामयते न कञ्चन स्वप्नं पश्यति तत् सुषुप्तम् ।

सुषुप्तस्थान एकीभूतः प्रज्ञानघन एवानन्दमयो ह्यानन्दभुक् चेतोमुखः प्राज्ञस्तृतीयः पादः (Mantra 5)

That is the state of deep sleep wherein the sleeper does not desire any objects, nor does he see any dream. The third quarter (Pada) is the (Prajna) whose sphere is deep sleep, in whom all (experiences) become unified or undifferentiated, who is verily a mass of consciousness entire, who is full of bliss and who experiences bliss and who is the path leading to knowledge (of the two other states).

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Earlier we have said that the concept of dreamless state, Sushupti, has no equivalent term in English. Now they call it non-REM sleep. Tomorrow they may come up with new expression. This state in Sanskrit is Sushuptabastha.

In this state you desire nothing , you see no dream. More than that, all experiences become unified. The special characteristic of this state is that what we see in the waking state, in the dream state, are all gone. It is a solid mass of consciousness. If objects do not have special characteristics, the whole thing becomes a solid mass. It is full of bliss, experiences bliss and it is the gateway to waking and dream states.

It is a state of ignorance because it continues to block the knowledge of reality. Sushupti,or dreamless. Is what scientists mean as non-REM sleep. It is different from the other two states. Because you don't have any experience here. When you come out of this state, you remember nothing. The only thing you have is “I remember nothing. I slept like a log”.

In the other two states, whether it is the waking state or it is the dreaming state, consciousness coming from within is added with the characteristics of objects, and the object is known. For example, I have a pen. There is consciousness coming out from me and there is this object, characteristics of this object, these two get added and that is how we know the external world. Awaken state is consciousness plus external objects.

The dream state is consciousness plus inner activity.

And what is Sushupti? Mass of consciousness. Because there might be inner activity, but we are not conscious of that . The whole thing is a solid block. You take a lump of soil, wet clay, you make different idols of them, if you go to the workplace of idol makers, you will see a mass of clay and they make different idols out of that. If something goes wrong, those idols are put back and again they become a mass of clay. It is exactly like that. It is unified - ekibhuta. Why unified? It is not really unified. Not unified in the sense that we have been in Samadhi abastha. In Samadhi the unification that is seen is of a different kind, unification here is another kind, here it is something like darkness of night. If you go to a new place, I have experienced it many times. And everytime I experience it, I remember this mantra, Nasadiya Sukta from the Vedas. You reach some place at night and the darkness of night covers everything. The whole thing is a solid mass. In the morning when the Sun is out, you see all these different objects. So this ekibhuta is the mass of consciousness in that sense. Unity is in that sense. But in Samadhi, unity one sees actual unity. You realise that unity is that unity is of jewellery made of gold. So if you go to a jewellers shop, you see different kinds of ornaments. Once you know that these are all of gold, you know that these are all gold. So here the objects lose their particular characteristics. In the sense that individual characteristics of the object are lost. We are not aware of it. It is lost.

This is going to be a very important thing later when Gaudapada will be taking up this idea, he will come up with such devastating consequences, so we need to understand that individual characteristics of objects and ideas are lost, completely lost.

Now there is a difference between this dreamless state and Atmajnan or Brahmajnan or Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Once you go into samadhi, you return as a wise person in the sense

that you will know that unity is the truth. In this state(dreamless) when you go and come out, multiplicity will come back. So there is a difference. Once an ignorant person enters samadhi, he returns as a wise person. When an ignorant person enters deep sleep he returns ignorant. Because multiplicity comes back. The individual characteristics, which have gone silent, which had been effaced, will surface again. Later on in the Puranas this idea was taken up and very beautifully this was expanded as Brahma's night, Brahma's day and how creation takes place and how there is this cyclic creation etc etc.

Bliss, that we talked about , we will take up in Shankaracharya again. Because the duality between subject object relation vanishes so there is only bliss. When we like something, we like to go near it and when we don't like someone we like to move away. Here there being no object, bliss does not manifest itself in the form of enjoyment or hatred. Bliss remains bliss. But more than that there is no effort to avoid something or to seek something. If I am hungry, I need food. To get food, I need to make an effort. To make an effort means to suffer. To work means to suffer. Yet we need to work.In this state, we neither have to seek for something, nor we have to avoid something. So it is a state of bliss.

And it is also known as a gateway to waking and dream state, because multiplicity returns once you come out of this state. This is the general idea of the dreamless, Sushuptabastha. Acharya Shankar says beautifully that in this state, the dreamless, what we experience in the dream, the expression for which is, Anyatha Grahan. Anyatha Grahan means wrong perception. For example, in the dream you may see, your friend becomes a tiger, a wrong perception. Because in dreams you never know what will come up. You don't know what places will come up. What characteristics of people will come up. So this is Anyatha Darshan as you see things wrongly and have wrong perception.

yatra supto na kanchan kāmaṁ kāmayate…you don't desire anything , Na swapnam paśyati.. Neither do you dream, it is ekī-bhūtaḥ.. It becomes a solid mass.the way night covers everything, that is what Acharya Shankar says. "Naishatam Ugrastyan Eva Aha" the way the whole thing become one in the darkness of the night. The mental activities associated with waking state and with the dream state , become kind of solidified , like a solid block that is why it is called prajñānā-ghana, solid block of consciousness. So, during the dreamless, nothing other than consciousness remains.

Our mind differentiates between subject and object and makes the subject run towards the object. This requires effort. Effort is pain. And that is missing in this dreamless state. That is why it is full of bliss, overflow of bliss.

Scientists say that non-REM sleep is so important for human beings. It is that stage of sleep when your body rejuvenates and muscles heal and all those things. Scientists are still struggling to understand this state.

The Upanishads are not trying to explain these things. Their job is entirely different. They are

just presenting the outline, what exactly happens in this state. And Acharya Shankar uses beautiful examples. Says, the way whatever a person does effortlessly is known as to be happy. For example when you do Japam you feel strained as you make effort. When you meditate, you can't meditate because you have to make an effort. Once something becomes effortless, it becomes easy. A kid does not like to write the alphabet, because he has to make effort. But when he grows up writing becomes effortless. Anything that is effortless is a joy. Kids don't want to eat because it is an effort. For us it is effortless. Anything where effort is required, it is a struggle, it is painful. Here in deep sleep there is no effort. Because there is no subject object distinction, Hence it is all blissful, full of joy.

And ceto-mukhaḥ ..it is the gateway, because multiplicity returns. Once multiplicity returns, first comes the dream state (non REM to REM sleep) and then to waking state.

But what is very interesting, what Acharya Shankara adds here is that this state, although covered with ignorance, is the knower of past and future. And that is why it is known as Prajna. Actually it is a very thin veil of ignorance differentiating pure Atman with deep sleep. This is something science will never understand and will never accept.

You feel Atman best when you are in deep sleep. That is why you feel fresh because you become you. In Samadhi, you completely and forever know who you are. But in dreamless state you only get it temporarily. It is something like a kid, coming to mom while playing and checking if she is there, gets peace and joy and then goes back to play.

So here in Sushupti, consciousness is fully there, minus the special characteristics of the object. And that is why it is known as Prajna.

In other two states, Shankara says, certain things are added to consciousness. Here nothing is added, it is in pure form. Prajna comes from the word Projna, which is consciousness.

This is the third state. Waking where consciousness is associated with mind and senses that is experienced in the external world. Dream state is when Atman, pure consciousness, is aware of inner workings of the mind, internal activities. The third when there is no such awareness of any activity, So consciousness minus awareness either of external objects or inner activity.

In this world, this is the best we can know about Atman , this is the best we can understand of Atman. With that mantra no 6 will begin.

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एष सर्वेश्वरः एष सर्वज्ञ एषोऽन्तर्याम्येष योनिः सर्वस्य प्रभवाप्ययौ हि भूतानाम् (Mantra 6)

This is the Lord of all; This is the knower of all; this is the controller within;this is the source of all and this is that form which all things originate and in which they finally disappear.

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This state consciousness which is associated with this deep sleep. You may recall we had mentioned how microcosm and macrocosm are one and the same. As far as dreamless

sleep is concerned it is the gateway to these two.
Similarly, earlier we had mentioned how our Brahman is also experienced in the three states, at the individual level and at the cosmic level. God at the cosmic level is the lord of all because all creation and all dissolution takes place here. So he is the Lord of all. Is the knower of all. He is the knower of everything. See how beautifully inner being and external God have been related.
The fourth, that is Turiya, is when that ignorance is removed and the cosmic ignorance which is known as the divine power of God is removed, that becomes Brahman. Creation and dissolution of all beings takes place here. So it is the cause of everything.
So it refers to this Prajna consciousness that we mentioned in deep sleep, it has a natural purity which is free of trappings of other two states. However this Lordship is not the Lordship of real God. For that you need to understand the macro. Here, the idea is very simple. In deep sleep, consciousness is pure, consciousness is solid mass,as you add characteristics to it you become aware of waking, you become aware of sleep. This being the gateway and this being the state where everything merges, this is like the Lord. So Sushupti, the dreamless, is the Lord of all the states. Acharya Sahankara says Prajna, in the third stage Sushupti is being pure consciousness, is not associated with anything extra external or even internal. This is the Lord of all. And this stays inside that as Atman associated with this third state, at that time is in its purest form. And that is why this is the ruler. If you try to understand it, the best way will be, pure Atman which knows no death, no birth, and when it identifies itself with the mind,It comes in three forms. Purest; associated with inner activities and associated with the external world.
The external world is of one kind, inner activities are of another and when it is calm and quiet it is the third. This is actually the Lord. So Prajna, first was Vishva, Second was Taijas, and this is Prajna. And Upanishad says this is the Lord of all. From here it will move to that state, which doesn't even have the covering of ignorance. And with this will begin the Karika which will come interspersed with the Mantras. We have 12 mantras in Mandukya Upanishad, of which 6 are covered so far.

8. World as a mere idea

We have earlier shown how AUM is everything and that there are three states in which a person usually stays, which are Waking (Jagrat), Dream (Swapna) and Dreamless (Sushupta) and elaborated on them.
Now Mandukya Karika is not easy to understand, it is considered to be one of most difficult works in Vedanta and so it has its own glamour and attracts people to study. While it is

difficult to understand, appreciating Mandukya Karika is even more difficult. And applying it to life is practically impossible for ordinary people like us. Only a person like Swami Vivekananda could apply.

Then why do we study it? We study because this is the ultimate ideal. Simply because I cannot practise it, does not mean I cannot know it. This is the beauty of Hindu religion. Even if you cannot practise it, ideals will always be placed before you. For example, Sannyasa is not meant for everyone. Even then from childhood we know that it is the fourth stage of life. Swami Vivekananda once said that, if you cannot hold on to an ideal, admit that you are weak. But do not lower the ideal. This is something extremely important.

Nowadays religion is being taught by anybody. In earlier times Vedic learning was imparted only by the Brahmins. We may not agree to that because higher learning should not be kept away from the masses. Yet the other side of the picture is that higher ideals and learning fall into wrong hands, who misinterpret and make fun of it. It is like an atomic bomb, falling into the hands of terrorists. Every profession, be it of a peon or a doctor or an engineer, requires a certain academic degree and training. But not religion. Here everybody can talk. Even film stars and scientists are talking about religion. But they are not trained to talk about religion. Earlier religions like Christianity imposed their ideas on science. Now science is paying back. In India our problem was the masses were deprived of high ideals of religion. Now the masses are paying back.

But these things should not deter us from learning higher ideals. That is the reason, the revered Pro-chancellor (earlier Vice chancellor) of Ramakrishna Mission Vivekananda Educational and Research Institute, Shrimat Swami Atmapryanandaji started these courses. The university now has more than twenty such courses and Indian Spiritual Heritage is one such course, where sacred books are being taught. The purpose is to avoid all cyber garbage and teach scriptures exactly as they are without any packaging and keep them on Youtube and books for the posterity that are crucial to understand Vedanta and Hindu religion.

One is that Micro and Macro are one and the same. I am an individual body, which as matter is one with the universe. Similarly, I have a mind, and as a pure mind it is one with the universal mind. And also, Atman, that we feel as soul, whatever that might mean is one with the world soul. Mandukya Karika does not go that way. It simply says that we have three states and we are aware of these three states of awareness.

We have already discussed the three states and their characteristics. The waking state we interact with the world. The dream state we dream of impressions that come to us from the waking state. The dreamless state, which does not have an equivalent word in English, the mind stops working. Science calls it non-REM sleep. But it is not like Samadhi. Once you come out of deep sleep, i.e., dreamless state, sushuptabastha, you only remember that you

remember nothing. But we can also say, not remembering anything also implies remembering. This is not word play. This is simple understanding that Abhava, the absence of something also requires a perception. For example, I don't have a pen in my hand. The absence of the pen is a clear perception. And now I take the pen. This is another perception. Remembering something is knowledge of the mind. Similarly, not remembering is also a knowledge.

Abhava plays a very important role in Vedanta as a means of proof. In fact, many other systems of Philosophy attack Vedanta on this point, that is Abhava. They would say Abhava is not a separate method of knowledge. But Vedanta will insist on it.

In the case of the dreamless we talk of feelings like "we do not remember anything", "I slept like a log", "I am feeling fresh"; It is through these feelings that we conclude what exactly might have happened. The multiplicity that was there before the dreamless returns after it is over. So, there is no change.

Samadhi is different. There the multiplicity vanishes forever. Sri Ramakrishna once tried to tell what happens during Samadhi. He said, I can describe up to a point, but after that someone covers my mouth and I cannot speak. Thus no one knows what happens in Samadhi. Then how does one know? It is remembrance that the mind stopped functioning. The perception changes forever. Multiplicity vanishes forever.

In the last sixth Mantra, we learned that Atman is the creator of everything, because the dream state and waking state comes out of here. It is not the creator in the sense of God. It is the creator in the sense that everything reappears.

Now onto the Mandukya Karika of GaudaPada. We have already discussed what a Karika is. It is a commentary on the Upanishad in verse form. Gauda Pada explains Mandukya Upanishad in this Karika. Here is the first Sloka of Karika

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बहिष्प्रज्ञो विभुर्विश्वो ह्यन्तःप्रज्ञस्तु तैजस।

धनप्रज्ञस्तथा प्राज्ञ एक एव त्रिधा स्मृतः II (Karika1)

Visva (The first quarter) is he who is all pervading and who experiences the external (gross) objects. Taijasa (the second quarter) is he who cognises the internal (the subtle) objects. Prajna is he who is a mass of consciousness. It is one alone who is thus known in the three states.

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All the six mantras discussed so far, are now being summed up and conclusions will be drawn. The conclusions can be devastating.

Just to remind you that verses of Vedas and Upanishads are called Mantra, while the verses of other works are slokas. So, the verses of Karika are slokas.

So, we have three states. Visva the first or Vaisvanara, the waking state is all pervading. The Atman in this state is identified with the mind that works in the external world. In Taijasa,

Atman identifies with the mind that works on the impression left by the external world in the waking state. It is just like that when you go to the office, you identify with the office surroundings. When you come back home, you identify with home surroundings. When you go somewhere for a vacation, you identify yourself as a tourist. You remain the same person but you identify yourself in different roles.

Just to give you a real-life example. I was hardly twenty or twenty-one, when I joined the Mission at the Ramakrishna Mission Vidyapith, Deoghar, a young Brahmachari. Shrimat Swami Suhitanandaji, who is the Vice President of the organisation now, was the principal of the Vidyapith then. He was a very strict and stern person in the role of the principal. Once the classes were over, he used to teach me Gita and later he used to take classes for all the brahmacharis. Here he was our Acharya. Then later in the evening we played volleyball, along with the senior students. Suhitanandaji also joined us. He was now a totally different personality, playing the game and having fun. Thus, he was the same person identifying with three different situations.

In the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, there are many such examples where a Brahmin, is a cook, while he is cooking, and a priest while doing puja.

Just like that Atma identifies itself with different states of mind. That is this one alone in the three states.

Here begins the conclusions and corollaries.

धनप्रज्ञस्तथा प्राज्ञ एक एव त्रिधा स्मृतः…. One appears as three different. A very important thing to remember here is that the idea of “I” remains constant. When you come out of the dreamless, deep sleep, you say that I don’t remember anything. When you dream you say that I dreamt such and such. And in the waking state you say I am doing this and you are doing that etc.

If we were truly this body, or if we were body-mind-ego complex, we would have continued something like that. But in the dream state “I” remains but the trappings of the external world do not remain. In the waking state, “I” remain but the trappings of the dream state do not remain, nor of the dreamless. Same In the dreamless. So, the idea of “I” remains. But “I” plus whatever is that vanishes. It implies that the same “I” moves freely through the three states, freely, spontaneously, unhindered. There is no baggage, just no baggage from one state to another. That is one single thing is moving freely in all the three states.

But if we were body, we were this mind, then this would not have been possible. Acharya Shankara says “I am that ". This memory keeps moving even in dream, remembers it is you and once you return you remember that dream. And then you realise that Atman is actually pure. It has no baggage. You just have to think of the idea that I have these three states and actually these are different realities that idea also moves away. I move freely between the

states and realise that ultimate reality is only one. Acharya Shankar gives the example of Maha Matsya, a big strong fish. In Sanskrit, particularly while discussing Philosophy, metaphors are used. It is called Naya. Like this Maha Matsya Nyaya. There are lots of such examples of Naya, which we shall come across, as we proceed. Now this huge powerful fish moves in the river sometimes in this bank, sometimes the other bank and sometimes straight along the river. Now whatever might be happening on the banks, the fish remains unaffected. This is just like Atman, moving freely through the states, without ever getting affected whatever might be happening in the states. It is similar to a bird, which flies from this tree to that tree, nothing affects it. So it is “I” that moves successively from one state to another and these are not three different “I"s. It is the same one single “I”. This is what Gauda Pada says.

The six mantras that we came across, are leading us to something. Even the second, third and fourth Karika slokas are not very important. They are leading us to something very important, extremely subtle. These are setting up the way to it.

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दक्षिणाक्षिमुखे विश्वो मनस्यन्तस्तु तैजसः ।

आकाशे च हृदि प्राज्ञस्त्रिधा देहे व्यवस्थितः ॥ (Karika 2)

Visva is he who cognises in the right eye, Taijasa is he who cognises in the mind within, and Prajna is he who constitutes the Akasa in the heart. Thus that one Atman is conceived as threefold in the one body

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This same Atman stays within us, at three different spots.

Vishva, the Atman which identifies itself with the waking state, stays in the right eye. It is a very famous statement from our Upanishads. Brihadaranyak Upanishad also mentions this. Although Upanishads came from the mouths of different teachers, ideas remain the same. Normal people use their right eye most to perceive the world. For example, people focus with the right eye while aiming with a gun, closing the left eye and focussing entirely with the right eye. So, the major work is done with the right eye.

When we want to see something very closely, we close the left eye focussing entirely with the right eye. So, the right eye is more active,

Neurology says that 80% of our brain functions are taken by the Visual cortex and so eyes are a very important organ. This is probably the reason why Upanishad says this. So, Visva cognises through right eye.

In Taijasa, the second state, the dream state, Atman resides in the mind. During this state, senses do not work. Hence the mind is used for cognising.

During Prajna, the dreamless state, the mind stops working. Atman then resides with the Akasa, the cavity of the heart. Actually these points have been stated in the Vedas and Upanishads at different places.

For us, it is important to understand the similarity of remembrance and dream. We might have thought that whatever we see in the waking state, is what we get as impressions in the dream state. But this is not all. We see a lot of other things also in dream. Even our sages who realised, did not write about this. Surprisingly, Freud, came up with this idea. Freud said, every dream is actually rooted in the subconscious and what we take from the external world.

Upanishads do not go into all this. They simply say that there is a similarity. You see something, you close your eyes, you think. You remember with the help of your mind. Just now if you close your eyes and think of what you are discussing, everything will be taken only by the mind. Of course you will be listening through your ears, but supposing you shut the ear for a while, that is exactly what happens in dream. If you close your eyes, you are alone, you can remember our conversation. So, the mind creates everything. Mind creates the image, mind creates the sound, mind creates the touch, mind creates the smell during memory. But in dream also it is the same thing. Because of this similarity, it is said that the seat of Taijasa is in the mind.

Now when it comes to Prajna, the dreamless state, all the mental activities cease. There is just a total mass of consciousness. All perceptions, all memories cease. So, you cannot have a particular organ for its seat. For if there is an organ, then there will be some kind of activity. So, it is believed that Atman at this state resides in the vacuum of the heart. People who have been initiated into a mantra by their Guru, particularly those from Ramakrishna Mission, are told to meditate there, because it is the seat of real consciousness. It is not the heart but the cavity of the heart. Chhandogya Upanishad calls it Dahar, meaning cave.

Now it is only in the waking state, that we know of the other two states. So, if there was no waking state, we would not have known that we were dreaming or were in a dreamless state.

Atman is a mere witness to the three states. It does not undergo any change during the three states. It is also the cognisor associated with the three states. On one hand Atman is associated with these three states, and so it knows the three states, but at the same time it is just like a witness. Does not get involved with anything. It just remains like the big fish, swimming with the current sometimes going to this bank, sometimes to that bank as described earlier.

The bottom line is that, in this body under the normal conditions, the conditions under which we can have Atman nearest is in the dreamless state. Although Atman is identified with a particular state, but it is a witness. It is not really involved.
To know beyond that we have to do Sadhana, and attain the level of Samadhi. Without that we cannot have further knowledge.
Whatever has been discussed has been continued again Karika no 3 and Karika and 4.

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विश्वो हि स्थूलभुङनित्यं तैजसः प्रविविक्तभुक्।

आनन्दभुक्तथा प्राज्ञस्त्रिधा भोगं निबोधत II (Karika 3)

Visva always experiences the gross (object), Taijasa the subtle and Prajna the blissful. Know these to be the threefold experiences

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One Atman is going through the states. Atman associated with the waking state, that is Visva. Gross objects satisfy Visva. Here Atman is like an enjoyer. Since it is the gross objects, it is the external world that Atman is identifying with.
In dream state, Taijasa, it experiences the subtle and is bliss in Prajna, the dreamless state. It is blissful because there is no effort there. These are the threefold experiences. Taijasa is satisfied with the subtle and Prajna by the blissful. We need all three kinds of satisfaction. Surprisingly, modern sleep psychologists are also talking of these things. They are saying that we need to dream and also need to have deep sleep. And the waking state is the so-called reality.
This knowledge was with us for thousands of years, but the scientists did not even know this till recently.

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स्थूलं तर्पयेते विश्वं प्रविविक्तं तु तैजसम् ।

आनन्दस्च तथा प्राज्ञं त्रिधा तृप्तिं निबोधत II (Karika 4)

The gross objects satisfy Visva, the subtle the Taijasa and blissful the Prajna. Know these to be three-folds satisfaction

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The third and fourth sloka don't give us anything deep in Philosophy. They simply explain something simple. External objects satisfy the Vishva, subtle the Taijasa, Bliss the Prajna. And these three kinds of satisfaction are required. If you are not having deep sleep, you will have problems. If you don't have dreams, you will have problems. Your Atman will not be satisfied. But the real conclusion comes in the fifth sloka of the Karika.

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त्रिषु धामसु य द्भोज्यों भोक्ता यश्च प्रकीर्तितः।

वेदैतदुभयं यस्तु स भुञ्जानो न लिप्यते॥ (Karika 5)

He who knows both the experiencer and the objects of experience that have been described (associated) with the three states is not affected through experiencing the objects

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It says one who knows both the experiencer and the objects of experience, associated with these three states, waking, dream and dreamless, will never get attached to the objects, even while enjoying them.

If you can understand what these three states are and if you understand how Atman enjoys these three states, if you understand how satisfaction comes in these three states, if you truly understand this, you will become detached. You will then behave like a witness. You will never get involved.

As we mentioned, the experiencer of all the three states is that same “I”. Because you say I dreamt, I slept, I remember nothing. So, it is the one single “I” which moves through the states. Most importantly, there is nothing to suggest that three different “I” s are working in three different states. We could have considered that there are three different Atman, if there is some proof, some kind of input, to show that actually there are three different Atman, in the three different states. None such proof exists and we know that the same “I” is continuing. Your “I” that was a kid is the same “I” who is reading this today. Nothing has changed.

So, all the objects of experience in the three states are actually states of mind. Because the I in three states enjoy these three things and the same Atman enjoys in the three different states. So, all the objects are actually just states of mind, nothing else.

There is no real enjoyment as we normally think, as we normally understand. If you really understand these three states, and if you know that it is the same who has been experiencing all these, then there will be certain conclusions. Then you will never get identified with changing perceiver of waking state, dream state and dreamless state. You will not identify with any of these three. For example, you may be identifying with the office, you may be identifying yourself as a tourist, or family situation, but once you think deep and start thinking, who am I who is moving with the three identities, what is my reality, you will understand that the reality is identification. Then you will know that it is this identification that works. You are not changing, but you are just identifying with the situation.

Therefore, you will never identify with the perceiver.

Here, although we took the example of office, tourist and family situation, you may say, I am identifying with family as I am a family man. But here we are discussing three states of mind, which is much deeper. You cannot say I am the same I in the waking state, which alone is true. You cannot say this because your dream state is as true as your waking state and your deep sleep state is as true. You cannot identify because you are not only this and it is the

same “I” continuing. The objects that came to you through the five senses, you will not be able to identify. If you have understood that the real you cannot be anyone of these three states because they are just states, and not the true you. The way you do not identify yourself with a dream, in the same way you will not identify yourself with the waking state, the gross objects, and the relative enjoyment of the gross body of external objects. More importantly objects remain objects in the waking state, they become impressions in dream and they both vanish in the dreamless. Therefore, objects cannot be real and have to be illusory. But the “I” does not vanish. It remains, but objects vanish. If the objects vanish, how can they be real? This is a very important argument of Vedanta.

In any perception, for example you are listening and I am talking, three things are involved. I am there, you are there, my talking is there, your listening is there. So, action is involved. Subject is there, object is there and action is there. In deep sleep, the subject remains, action goes away, object goes away. Now if dreamless is a reality as has been shown through all these mantras and discussions, then how can you say that the objects are real? Because if you are real, they would have continued to be there, just the way “I” continues. There the “I” is there, objects are not there. That itself shows the illusory nature of the objects and of the world. So, holding on these objects, considering these objects to be real, holding on to them is not permitted in Vedanta.

Now, we are discussing the Atman as perceived by the individual. When Atman is discussed being all pervasive, that is at cosmic level will be discussed later. Right now, we are just discussing things the way we see it.

Our mind has different ideas. These are Vrittis. These are like ripples in a lake, if we imagine our mind as the lake. The ripples are like Vritris. This Vritti is a technical term. Vritti has been discussed in our Raja Yog talks. But Atman is actually a detached witness to our thoughts, that is Vrittis. In Raja Yog, they talk of different kinds of Vrittis, Praman, Vipariya, Vikalpa, Nidra and Smriti. Pramana is the knowledge that comes to us in the waking state through valid means. Then there are imaginations, delusions, memory and sleep. Mandukya Karika does away with imaginations, delusions, memories. It rather breaks sleep into two parts, dream and dreamless. And that along with the waking state makes the three states. Mandukya Karika talks about the three states and not the Vrittis.

In Yog we also see how Atman known as Purusha is witness to everything. In Mandukya also, Atman is a witness.

The important thing here is that once you realise that consciousness alone can know these things, and that you are that consciousness, because you are knowing. This means you are a witness. What Mandukya does here is that, it shows you logically how there are three states that you are identifying with, and if these be true, which has been shown earlier, then as there is no existence of objects in the dreamless and they are just mental ideas.

So, there is no reason for you to identify, to hold on to, to cling to the waking. For example, if there is fire and we put different types of wood, rotten wood, good wood, whatever, the fire burns everything. But the essence of fire remains the same and it does not change. Similarly, Atman is in the waking state, dream state and dreamless state, but it never changes. So, Atman is always the witness.

This is where spiritual journey begins. This is not the end, but just the beginning. Once this is known and we get established in this knowledge, we know that the wealth that we have in waking state, is as illusory as the wealth in dream state, as non-existent in the dreamless state. This is true not only for wealth but for every object.

So, what happens then? It makes you slightly detached. It puts you into thinking mode. And then it makes you ready for higher things. If you are holding onto the world, like a leach holding onto some life form where it can suck blood, it is impossible for you to understand spiritual truths, particularly of the Upanishads. That way Upanishads are not meant for all. If you start analysing, start thinking on these terms, then you will realise that actually you are a mere witness. And holding onto this external world is a very stupid idea. Because after all the world is as illusory as it is in the dream. And this has been explained.

So, that is about the fifth Karika, where it logically shows why we should not be clinging on to, holding on to the world. Once we understand this knowledge, it marks the beginning of a spiritual journey.

Note:

There is a question. It is like this. If there is a seat of experience, then how can Atman be all pervasive? Now Atman is identified with this body-mind. We are discussing that. This is not the Atman that normally we think is of. Here the idea of Atman is the idea of Antaryami. Right now, the discussion is at the individual level. Not at the cosmic level. Every now and then, Acharya Shankar reminds us that micro and macro are the same. But it was mentioned earlier because we are conscious of Atman more as the “I”, Upanishads begin from here. This is the general characteristic of the Upanishads, whenever they have to teach, they kind of hold your hand, wherever you are and slowly they take you up. You are conscious of your body and you are also conscious of your dream state, and you remember at times you have deep sleep. Then begins the discussion. When they are talking about the seat of consciousness, leave this discussion aside.

When you actually meditate, your meditation begins with your gross body. Physical body. And you imagine things. Suppose your Ishta is Sri Ramachandra, let say, you imagine that you have a heart and there is a lotus, Sri Ramachandra is there, and the form that has been told you meditate on that. Slowly your mind becomes concentrated, your mind becomes intense. Then you start experiencing certain things and finally you experience Sri Ramachandra, actually, literally in the form of light within your heart. It actually happens, it happens with every Sadhaka, and that is when they become saints. Once you have that experience, you become a saint. The next stage is seeing Sri Ramachandra

everywhere, in everything and in everybody. It requires a more subtle mind. And then there might be for some, not for all, another state where you realise that there is no you, no Sri Ramachandra, there is only consciousness in the form of that divine light. This is Advaita. When they are talking about Atman being all pervasive, they are talking about that state. When you talk of Sri Ramachandra, Sri Krishna, Sri Ramakrishna being the reality, different religions talk of their idols, you are talking of a different state. And when you see God within your heart this is another state. Well depending on what school of thought you follow, one will say this is first, that is second, that is third. The others will put it the other way round. That's not our issue or our problem right now.

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9. Does God Create the universe

We covered the fifth verse of Karika and before that the six mantras of Mandukya upanishad. The fifth Karika showed logically, how we can be detached and should not hold on to this world. This the start of a spiritual journey, to freedom.
What is the way to freedom? The way to freedom is, when you understand the three states, waking, dream and dreamless, you know that you are constant, everything else is variable. You alone are eternal amidst the changing scenes. That way you will not be affected by it or get attached to any of these states.
What happens at the individual level, the three states of existence that come and go. Something similar happens at the state of cosmic creation. The Upanishads are not simplistic scripture. By simplistic scripture we mean the general idea about even Hindu religion, that is God, God is looking after us, after death He will take us somewhere etc. Upanishads do not go that way. It takes you to such depths that your mind goes blank.
We shall now discuss Karika verse no 6. and creation. Karika verses 6 to 9 take up various theories of creation.
If we look at the philosophical systems of the world, we find that every system of philosophy has to answer questions like who am I, from where I have come? These are fundamental questions on creation, considering inevitability of birth and death,
Be it science, be it speculative philosophy, be it realistic philosophy, be it religion, if it calls itself a system of thought, it has to say how this creation took place. They have to explain it even at the cosmological level. Because whatever happens at the individual level, happens at the cosmological level too.
The real “I” of the cosmos cannot be responsible for whatever is happening. Because at the individual level we have said that it is mind, it is mind that goes on creating all these. Atman, you are in no way responsible, the true “I”.

Similarly Brahman is in no way connected with whatever is going on in this cosmos. When they were describing these three states, it was not that they were giving out some gems. The purpose is to take us to great heights of philosophy.

There are many religious systems and most of them have mythologies of creation. There is a beautiful story about Bertrand Russel. When he was a quite young philosopher, he was delivering a talk on the idea of creation. A elderly lady got up and said, young man, whatever you say sounds good. But the fact is, I don't agree with you. This earth rests on a tortoise. Bertrand Russel asked, May I ask you Madam, where that tortoise rests? That lady said, I see you are a clever young man, well it's tortoises all the way down. So the tortoise rests on another tortoise, which rests on another tortoise, which again rests on another tortoise and it just goes on. These mythological concepts are all right, as far as mythologies are concerned. But serious minds will not accept all these.

How do scientists look at it? First, whenever we think of science we have to go back to Greek thinkers. Now when we go to Greek thinkers, apart from the mythologies, the most important is Thales. These philosophers came up with the idea that it is one single atom, from which everything else slowly comes out. And Thales was of the opinion that it is water. Everything comes out of water, from water molecule. later philosophers added three more elements. In the Indian system we have five, the Pancha Bhuta which are Prithvi (Earth), Apas (Water), Agni (Fire), Vayu (Air), Akasha(Aether). But the concept of the Greek thinkers was different from the Indians. So once they moved to four elements, somehow it was seen that it was not satisfactory. Then there was Pythagoras, and then came Plato and they believed that everything is about numbers and the famous term is Platonic solids. Then came Democritus, one of the leading philosophers, and he came up with the idea of invisible atoms and they are moving through a void. Then there was Aristotle who opposed this idea.These are just very short overviews.

Remember that famous Michelson-Morley experiment where he tried to find whether or not the speed of light is affected by all these theories. He found that the speed of light is independent of such theories and is always constant. Then came Parmenides, another Greek philosopher, who said all the changes that we see, these are an illusion and this true underlying reality never undergoes any change, So, that is how the Greek philosophers saw. Then came science. We find two very important things in science. One, is the present day Big bang-Black hole theory, we are not going into details of that. In short it is all about energy and matter, particularly after Einstein came and quantum physics came, everything is about energy matter etc. And as far as life itself is concerned they don’t have any answer, from where does life come. And they are talking about consciousness by which they mean sentients, mind. And then there was Darwin, who came up with his revolutionary idea of evolution, which is not accepted even today by many American states. Now the US supreme

court has ruled that not accepting evolution is not an option. India has accepted Darwin's theory long ago.

So, now when you look at science, this is not everything, because there are some scientists who believe in a disconnected universe, collectively known as multiverses. And that way they try to define the universe, in an entirely different way.

Then there are people who believe in Naturalism. Thinkers here believe only natural laws are enough to explain this universe. So, these are the broad ideas.

When it comes to religion, religions can be classified into different categories. The first of them is Animism. You find the practice of Animism even today, particularly in Japan, where you believe that non-human things have some divine origin, or there is some divinity. That way you find that Animals, plants etc, other objects of this natural world, have divinity in them. Very often people confuse the practices of Hindu religion as animism. But Hindu practices are not Animism.

Then there is Totemism. They believe that there is a divine connection between humans and other beings. So naturally their ideas of creation will change.

But most interesting is polytheism, where people worship many Gods, which is idolatry. Hinduism is not polytheistic. So they may or may not believe in a Supreme God. Now this Supreme God, whosoever he is, he is devoid of all kinds of bias, generally in Polytheism. And he is unconcerned with the mundane desires, care etc.

Then we have Dualists. They succeed in explaining evil, why there is evil in the world. But they cannot explain why there is order in the universe, there is a good force and a bad force, how come there is order? They are not able to explain. These points are being mentioned just to give an idea in short. The main thing will come later.

And then comes the most popular monotheistic religions. The Abrahamic religions. They believe that God is one and that explains order in the world. Dualists cannot explain order in the world. For example our Samkhya and Yog philosophies, they are dualists and they believe that there is matter and there is consciousness, they somehow come together. But how they come together, how the order comes, they have no answer. But the moment you accept monotheism as true, they cannot explain evil. God is just, God is caring, loving. From where does evil come? Ultimately you find when you analyse threadbare, monotheistic religions, they are a kind of combination of first monotheism because there is one god, and in Animism because they believe in Ghosts ets, Jinns. They believe in all those things. And they are also Dualists because they believe in heaven and hell. When you say eternal heaven, eternal hell, whatever term you may use, ultimately you become dualist, without even knowing it. All those things are brought under one umbrella. Naturally they then explain creation; they explain whatever suits them. Now when you come to Christianity, which has

really come up with lots of theories of creation, the most important for them is that creation happens when God creates beings according to His will, because His will is all powerful. And then people came up with the idea of intelligent design. According to intelligent design you find that there are features in this natural world which can be explained as someone that God is like a great watch-maker - intelligent design. And there is a theistic evolution. There is Darwin's evolution and here is theistic evolution, according to which God designs an universe, in which everything evolves naturally, I am not sure what exactly can be concluded from these discussions. One thing that can be concluded is that they come up with an explanation that will suit their philosophical outlook.

When you come to India, India also has its fair share of theories of creation. Most important is Kanad's, who came up with Anu (Atom). He is kind of an Atomist, but Atomism of Kanad is different from Atomism of say Greek philosophers. Because in Greek philosophy, the atoms are insentient. But here the atoms are created by God. So they are powered by God. Then we have theories from Samkhya according to which there is energy , Prakriti and consciousness and then we have many theories in Vedanta. We need not go into all that because we will now come back to Karika, where all these things will be taken up. Essentially the discussion that we are going to have starting Karika 6 is about how creation comes from the conscious principle. Why conscious principle? Because at the individual level it was shown how the three states (Visva, Taijasa and Sushupti) keep changing but there is a conscious principle. Upanishads will never go into theories like science where creation comes out of energy. No way. Upanishads will always talk about creation coming out from sentients, Chaitanya.

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प्रभवः सर्वभावानां सतामिति विनिश्च्ययः।

सर्व जनयति प्रानश्चेतोंशुन्पुरुषः पृथक् ॥ (Karika 6)

It is thoroughly established that the coming into effect can be predicted only of all positive entities that exist. The Prajna manifests all. The Purusa creates the conscious beings (The Jivas) in their manifold form separately

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Starting from Karika 6 to 9 , they will be discussing various theories of creation, which are related to the divine, conscious principle. This Karika no 6 says..

प्रभवः सर्वभावानां सतामिति विनिश्च्ययः if the object has to be real then the cause has to be real, simple reasoning. if the object is unreal, the cause has to be unreal. Simplicity and elegance are both of very high level. Only those objects come into existence those which truly exist. If they don't exist, they will not come into existence.

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Gita beautifully says in Chapter 2, Verse 16 - “NaSato vidyate bhavo, nabhavo viydate sarah, ubhayarapi drishtonto stavanayos tatva darshibhih- which means anything that changes due to time is temporary, it has no existence (bhavah) and and anything that is temporary is basically non-existent.

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How do creation take place? How do things evolve? Those who consider Brahman as the cause, we find this description repeatedly in the Upanishads where Brahman is the cause and everything evolves from Brahman. If everything evolves from Brahman, what exactly happens is that Brahman itself becomes Prana, the creative force. This creative force now appears as insentient. Things that lack consciousness. and that Brahman is there as sentient. So the idea is, that there is a creation but everything is Brahman. So everything is not creation but manifestation. When you have gold, you make ornaments out of gold. it is not really creation. It is manifestation. Creation means there was something and you created something, absolutely different out of it.

So, every time we use the word creation it implies, it was non-existent thing, and it came into existence. Vedanta differs from every other system of thought exactly here. It says if it did not exist in the beginning it can never come into existence. Because it existed, that is how it has come. What existed is Brahman. What is coming out is Brahman. There is nothing else other than Brahman.

Is the pen that I am using now, Brahman? Yes it is Brahman, in the form of Prana, which appears as energy. It is nothing else. Two theories are basically mentioned here. First is, Those who believe that creation is an illusion, everything is illusory, this Karika contradicts that. It is not an illusion. At the same time, it is important to note that there is no causal relation. Normally we talk about Karma, as you sow so you reap. But Mandukya Karika will just brush it away. There is no causal relationship between creation and Brahman. Because Brahman by its power now appears as Prana, the cosmic energy. So Prana and Brahman are not different. So it is a manifestation. There is no doubt that creation is here. You cannot say that creation does not exist. But creation does not exist in the sense that these have an independent reality. So this microphone that you can see, does not have an independent reality beyond Brahman. So creation actually does not exist in the sense that we understand that we created something. Normal meaning of creation as we mentioned God creates, out of nothing. No, it is not. It cannot be! This is what this Karika means to say.

Acharya Shankar explains this with his famous example - Son of barren woman, which is neither real nor imaginary. A barren woman cannot have a son. So this creation that we see all around us is not a non-existent thing, Brahman associated with Maya functions as Prana, and here Brahman associated with Maya. Maya is something we really do not understand. That discussion will be going on. That is why they discussed the three states. This is the

cause of the universe.

It is seen that real is always born of real, and that way real is connected with the real, since the world is seen as real. so it must be born of someone real. That means the Buddhist concept of coming out from Shunya, everything is Shunya, is not accepted. Son of Barren woman, is neither seen as real, nor seen as imaginary. That means the world is seen as imaginary. If you say the word is a dream as some Buddhist systems have thought then Brahman too becomes imaginary. That which is appearing to me as real, if that is imaginary then Brahman too becomes imaginary. In reality Brahman is beyond the grasp of mind. This is where Vedanta differs from every other system of thought. But can be inferred by the effect of the form of the universe.

What about false perception? Says, yes there can be false perception. You may mistake something for something else, but there has to be some substratum. What substratum? Substratum on which you are making this mistake. For example there is mirage. If you are seeing mirage, you are seeing water in the desert. The desert has to exist and you must have knowledge of water prior to seeing this mirage. So ultimately there is this Jara Chaitanya, all these expressions go on. The bottomline is that it is not a causal relation. You say that Brahman caused something to come out, which is kind of different from it. No. Whatever is, is Brahman. Brahman alone has become everything.

So, through this it also shows that the three states of Visva, Taijasa and Prajna, associated with names and forms, are all the results of Maya. It is that one same thing, because of the divine power, appearing as different. This is what Karika no 6 says.

प्रभवः सर्वभावानां - only those objects appear, only those objects get manifested, which truly exist.

Brahman alone exists. So what comes before us is Brahman. It is Prana, which manifests as all inanimate things and Purusha conscious Brahman manifest the conscious beings in their manifold forms.

The bottom line is just to understand that, this Karika explains two things. First, do not think that creation is non-existent and at the same time there is no causal relation. That means it is not creation but manifestation. Those of you who have been listening to our inspired talks, by Swami Vivekananda series, their Swamiji is repeatedly talking about this manifestation. It is not creation but manifestation. But our mind is such that we cannot really get out of this.

Now to verse no 7. In verse no 7 and 8 they give cosmological arguments regarding God's existence. These arguments are used by different systems of thought, These different systems of thought, creation coming from God, can be broadly classified into four. These are known as cosmological.

First is , Creation is the manifestation of divine power. There is God who has divine power, manifestation of divine power. Second is creation is an illusion conjured up by God. God

creates this illusion of creation. The third is, it is God's will and hence it has to be real. This third one and the first one are slightly different. The third one is about monotheistic God,or simply theistic God. Fourth is there are certain schools of thought, who believe that, It is a product of time i.e.,Kal, Intelligent design was mentioned. We have this concept in the western world, something like that, The whole thing continues. Time is the ultimate mover of everything. These are the four fundamental things that will be discussed in Karika no 7 and Karika no 8.

It is about creation as manifestation of power by God, creation as an illusion conjured up by God, God's will and God is indifferent, Kala, as we find in systems of Shakti, where Mother Kali is there, and she is doing everything. So, this discussion will be

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विभूतिं प्रसवं त्वन्ये मन्यन्ते सृष्टिचिन्तकाः ।
स्वप्नमायासरुपेति सृष्टिरन्यैर्विकल्पिता ॥ (Karika 7)

Those who think of (the process of) creation believe it to be the manifestation of the superhuman power of God ; while others look upon it as the same nature as dream and illusion.

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The first one was about creation coming out of Brahman. Those who contemplate the process of creation, as manifestation of God's powers and others imagine it to be like a dream, an illusion. So this Karika is about personal God and hence it is theistic theory of creation. Here we find two very important things. First , creation is real, but is God's power. The second is that creation is an illusion,Swapnamaya Sarupeti (Partly dream & Partly Maya, illusion). In either case, Acharya Shankar asserts, why worry about creation? Why pay attention to creation? Once you have known that, God alone is true, rather go for God, why worry about creation? If you have known that it is an illusion.

The problem is that even those who believe that this is an illusion conjured up by God, they go into great detail to explain how this creation took place. The goal of the Upanishads is one, and only one, to make you realise that Atman is Brahman. Why bother about creation, if this is your theory.

Acharya Shankar says those who really want to get God realisation, those who want to have spiritual realisation, why should they bother about this? They don't have any intention of applying their mind to these things. and then he quotes the famous mantra from the Vedas, where it says, Indra conjures up many forms by the power of his maya.

People who are extremely extrovert, people who are not indrawn, people who are not contemplative, only those people will go to try to find out what creation is based on this theory. He is talking about every theory.

Then he talks about the famous rope trick. Those who are interested in magic, particularly Indian magic, will know that rope trick jugglery was to throw a rope up and one used to climb up. In general it was believed it was some kind of illusion that was created. Vedic God, Indra, creates this illusion and so magic in India is called Indrajal in India. The net of Indra literally. Acharya says in his commentary, the dreamless state, the dream state are just like the rope thrown up by the conjuror.They don't have any existence. They don't have any real existence.

Earlier it was mentioned that, if you think deeply that you alone are true, and these states are continuously changing, you will never get attached to those states. Acharya goes one step further and says these states are exactly like the rope thrown up by the magician in the famous rope trick. Who is the magician? You are the magician. You create your own dreams, you create your dreamless state, worse you create your waking state. In Swami Vivekananda's inspired talks we come across a sentence which says that we create our stories, our waking state is a story, Just like dream in dream we keep on weaving stories, just like that waking state is also weaving of stories. So, Visva, Taijasa, Prajna these states have just been conjured up by you. The real magician is beyond all this and you cannot see him. What you see is his magic. You are so engrossed in the magic that you feel that magician alone is true, magic is not. We are so engrossed by our states, waking, dream and dreamless, we forget that the real magician is You, the Atman. Who is that Atman? Turiya, about which we shall discuss once this discussion on creation is over.

If everything is an illusion, why bother about it, why worry about it ? If you are really interested in spirituality, you are moksha kami, you want moksha, then you will not have any interest in these things, provided your idea of creation is that everything is an illusion.

In the cosmological also ,, there is creation by God and creation is an illusion thrown up by God. We accept that. There are no issues with that. The only thing is that this Atman is throwing up these states.

Now on to Karika no 8

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इच्छामात्रं प्रभोः सृष्टिरिति सृष्टौ विनिश्चिताः ।

कालात्प्रसुतिं भूतानां मन्यन्ते कालचिन्तकाः ॥ (karika 8)

Those who affirm (the existence of created objects) attribute this manifestation to the mere will of God, while those who look upon time as real declare time to be the manifestor of all beings

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There are people who are convinced of the reality of this universe, reality of the object, they believe that God creates all these by his mere will. And there are people who believe that everything is because of Time, Kal. This happens with those who believe in Shakti worship.

Time . There was a system of thought which evolved from astrology, Jyotish. They also had a philosophy of their own. In India we normally talk about six systems of philosophy. But that is not really correct. Those of you who are interested in Indian philosophy may study Sarvadarshan Sangraha. You will find how many different kinds of philosophy there are. So Grammarians have their own system of Philosophy. Similarly, those who are into astrology (Jyotish) or into astronomy have a theory of their own. That is why you find these astrologers, some of them are really good. And they will tell you that on such and such date, there will be such and such constellations and such and such things will happen to you. Because they believe that everything is controlled by time.

Once I met a very nice astrologer and he told me beautifully, look I firmly believe that God is the master of everything, but he gets things done through these planets and stars. I liked his argument. If somebody is consistent in his argument, there is no question in appreciating him. I may not agree with you, that may not be my philosophy, but at least you are consistent about your philosophy. If you talk to kids, you will find that they are not consistent about their demands, nor are they consistent about what they say. Most people are like these kids. When they grow up, even if they become scientists ,thinkers or philosophers,there are inconsistencies in what they say. So if some gentleman has a very clear and consistent philosophy at least you should appreciate that, it is fine.

So they say that God is Satya Sankalp. As the Bible beautifully says, God said let there be light and there was light. He is Satya Sankalp. Something similar happens in Valmiki Ramayana, where Sri Ramachandra promises his friend Sugreeb, that Bali is dead, and Bali is dead. There is no force in the world that can save him. Satya Sankalp, He just wills, and it is done. And all these things are summed up in Karika 9 which is very interesting, which you must understand. Because this ends the discussion on the three states that we have.

If creation is real, here we are not discussing manifestation mind it, we are discussing creation, then this is Teleological, that is it has to have a purpose. There is a very serious problem with western outlook. In western outlook, there is a system, where they say that, in Greek philosophy that we mentioned earlier, creation is infinite. Going on. But the Christian thought process, influenced by Judaism and of course later Islam, whole thing became finite. There is a beginning to the universe. If there is a beginning to the universe, and creation is by God, whether it is intelligent design or whatever, creation comes from God. Most importantly in Christianity we have creationism, where God created this and that. God created the earth and the sun and the moon. There must be some purpose to it. Because this is in human nature to ask why.

Fine, there are so many theories of creation, God created in this process, Creation is an illusion, creation is a reality, creation works out through time, but why? This is where the western system of thought somewhere gets a bit materialistic. If God created and God

created at some point of time, there must be a purpose. So my life must have a purpose. I must have a purpose in life. Have we found the goal in life? The Indian system of thought does not follow exactly those principles, because ultimately whatever philosophy, the religious outlook, you will find that you are connected with God. And the only purpose of life is to be one with the source, to be one with God. When we talk about four goals in life, they are known as Purusharth, Dharma,Artha, Kam, Miksha,. Through all this, you can reach God. In our own times, when Gandhiji began his political life, he said I want to see whether or not I can achieve God through politics. So Dharma, Artha, Kam. Moksha is not the end of the ways, as Gandhiji tried through Politics.

Gaudapada classifies them into two.

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भोगार्थ सृष्टिरित्यन्ते क्रिडार्थमिति चापरे ।

देवस्यैष स्वभाबोऽयमाप्तकामस्य का स्पृहा ॥ (Karika 9)

Others think that manifestation is for the purpose of enjoyment (of God) while others attribute it to mere diversion (on the part of God). But it is the very mature of Effulgent Being (Atman) (for) ,what other desire is possible for Him whose desire is always in the state of fulfilment.

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Some say that Manifestation is for God's enjoyment while attribute to his diversion. **भोगार्थ** - God wants to enjoy his own creation, **क्रिडार्थम** ..divine sports,he creates out of fun, These are different concepts, like if you look at different religious books, they will ask you why creation? and they will answer. The infinite wants to test itself, hence this universe. One has to become two to test. I am one, I want to be many. But sometimes it sounds too crude. Krirartha, leela ..it is all play, game.

Sri Ramakrishna mostly talks about Leela. Because a devotee will always want to know why this creation? Why am I here? Starting from Karika 6, where it was described that creation is not non-existent nor is there a causal relation, but if you try to find a meaning and purpose in life, then Gaurapada says, these are Swabhaba, nature, it just goes on , that is nature of things. Because **आप्तकामस्य का स्पृहा -** Brahman itself fulfilled, itself content, God is self fulfilled, self content. How can God have any desire? How can Brahman have any desire? For that matter, you as Atman, how can you have desire? This is one of those rarest of statements that I remember from my first reading of Mandukya Karika, way back in 1986. when I was being taught by my great mentor and teacher Shrimad Swami Mokshadananda Maharaj. And I found it so fascinating? how can the desireless have any desire. Why should he create? Creation always implies multiplicity, and multiplicity will always be name and form. Where you see names and forms you know that there is multiplicity. So creation

always means multiplicity. So naturally it is subject to transformation from one state to another. There will be birth, there will be growth, there will be decay, there will be annihilation in the form of death. Gaudapada refutes all these theories,and says Srishti Swabhava. Geeta also says Swabhavastu pravartate . It is in the nature of things. It goes like that.

Sri Ramakrishna very beautifully says, there is a snake, sometimes it sits, sometimes it moves, it is in the nature of beings. When it moves it is a snake, when it sits it is a snake. There is no purpose in creation. There can never be any purpose in creation. It is the nature of the things. So, creation at some finite moment of time, with some purpose is not acceptable to us. Creation itself is Maya. So all theories that concern creation , every theory of creation is a result of Maya. although we ascribe it to God. Whatever creation, whatever creation, creation is always because of Maya in Vedanta, and he shows through these discussions.

Creation is because of Maya so all theories of creation have to belong to Maya. But wrongly we ascribe creation and theories of creation to God. God is in no way connected with any creation. And all these powers and all those things it is man's desire, my own desires. There is an astrologer to whom these movements of Planets are all important. So he thinks creation is because of time. There is a person who worships power, he feels that it is God's power. There is a person who is indifferent to everything. He will say God is indifferent to all these. Creation is not outside, creation is here in our mind. It is our own desires that get transposed on God and then return as theories of creation from God centering God, phenomenal, can be so disturbing.

There is no creation actually. All creation is in the mind. So, is creation an illusion? No. Till there is mind, creation is very much true. That is why they use the term manifestation. It is Maya, not in the sense of illusion, but in the sense of manifestation. Those who take the act of creation as real, there are philosophers who consider the act of creation as real. Earlier it was mentioned. But creation itself is illusory and they fail to explain how the act of creation too is not real. The idea is there never was creation whether you take creation as real or you creation as unreal.

If you take creation as real, in that case you are superimposing certain ideas on God, which cannot happen as then God will become God with desire. God with desires is no God. So creation is illusory. If creation is illusory, then please explain why you are focussing on this act of creation?

So creation, as illusory or as real, is not coming from God. Creation belongs to Maya which is neither real, nor unreal. We will be having more of it as we proceed. Creation is mere manifestation It is not real. Creation is never real.

Conclusion is, whatever is, is Brahman only. The duality that we see is due to ignorance. And it is the ignorant minds like ours, subject to maya, that wants to believe in different theories of creation. This is what Gaudapada says in conclusion.
There is no creation, only manifestation, which is the nature of things. We have been created, we have minds, we are ignorant. We are accustomed to seeing duality. So the ultimate act of creation we are seeing as an act creation where there is actually no reaction, it is only manifestation. Because Brahman alone remains. Brahman can never become two. To assert, to explain this whole thing, will come the next mantra of Mandukya Upanishad. That is mantra number seven.It would be great to memorise this mantra.

10. Atman - what is it?

Before we move to Mantra no 7 of Mandukya Upanishad, we need to discuss a few things. As we already mentioned, there is a fundamental difference between Mandukya Upanishad and any other Upanishad, as also Mandukya Upanishad and any other religious book of the world, including The Vedas, Bhagavatam, Ramayan, Bible, Quran and every other book. Mandukya Upanishad is absolutely unusual. When a spiritual seeker goes into the depths of silence, by practising whatever means, it may be Yog, it may be Bhakti, it may be Jnan, it may be anything, the mind starts becoming silent. As the mind gets more and more silent, the perception starts becoming clearer. This is true for anybody who does this practice.
For example when you are very busy in your office or any other work, and suddenly you find that too much work has come up. You want to get a perspective, you want to take a step back, and just sit silently for a while and slowly things start becoming clear. If this is what happens when you become silent, just imagine what would happen if you make becoming silent a practice of your life. This is what monks do, this is what spiritual seekers do. And this is what spiritual greats have done.
Now as in the world, not everybody has the same amount of wealth, even if doing the same business, similarly as one goes into spiritual practices, not everyone can have the same level of spiritual realisation. So some of them are greats, we respect them as prophets, incarnation of God, Avatar etc.
For us these are mere words. We cannot differentiate between a saint and an Avatar. It is all by word of mouth. I respect someone, I believe his words, whatever he says I accept, so that is how Krishna is God. There is no proof or will there ever be any proof of it. It is the same with Jesus, same with others. It is just a matter of belief.
Their words, although they may say that these are words of God, apaurusheya (means not of human, authorless, impersonal), the fact is whatever these spiritual greats say, become

spiritual grantha (book).

The sacred books, the sacred texts, whether it be Torah of the Jews, the Bible of the Christians, or the Vedas of the Hindus, the story remains the same.

Even when a historical figure like Jesus teaches which nobody can doubt, there are people who raise questions and won't accept. During his own time, people did not believe him. Even his own disciples were sceptical about him, so much so that he was crucified. If that be the fate of Jesus in his own lifetime, just imagine what critics will say about a spiritual great when he is far removed in time and space.

When Jesus says Father in Heaven, what does it mean to us? It just means that I respect Jesus, I believe in his words, so there is a father in heaven. That is why many people criticise religion as a matter of faith. But it would make a difference if the spiritual book says that what is written in the book, you too can attain it by practice. Then it is just not a matter of faith. It shows the way to attain. Only Vedanta says that you can have first hand experience.

Mandukya Karika is different. Mandukya Karika does say the things that the sages had realised, but it also tries to be as logical as possible more logically than any other sacred texts even of the Hindus, leave alone the other religions.

Mandukya Karika tries to be as rational, as reasonable, as possible. Even amongst all other Upanishads, for example this beautiful Upanishad, Ishopanishad or Kathopanishad (we have them in the playlist). These are beautiful Upanishads. Ishopanishad, just in eighteen mantras, sums up the entire Hindu religion. Kathopanishad, presents Vedanta in its full majesty, full glory. However there also you have to accept those words where he says, इति शुश्रुम धीराणां ये नस्तद्विचचक्षिरे, (iti śuśruma dhīrāṇāṁ ye naḥ tat vicacakṣire) which means this is what we heard from the sages, this is what has come to us as tradition. But not in Mandukya Upanishad. Here everything goes rationally.

We have mentioned earlier that AUM is everything, and that when it was said AUM is everything, it was not a matter of belief. We explained why AUM is everything.

And then Mandukya Upanishad talked about the three states, Waking, Dream, Dreamless, that is Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupti. It really does not tally with REM sleep and non-REM sleep. Swapna is an Avastha, and Dreamless is an Avastha. So you don't say sleep with dreams, and sleep without dreams. It is a state. Dream is a state and dreamlessness is a state. We also mentioned that AUM has four parts of which three are waking, dream and dreamless. Now comes the fourth quarter. We shall discuss this fourth quarter now.

As we mentioned earlier chaturtha. Chatturiya, then Cha is dropped, it is Turiya. It was also mentioned that this is not really a state. Now this will be explained further how this is not a state and it is a whole. We explained the way we take a coin and think of a rupee, one quarter, then two quarter, then three quarter, and then you do not say four quarter, you say

the whole. Just like that Atman is the whole, It is not the fourth quarter. Although the term is Chaturthapada, the fourth quarter, but really the fourth quarter is not a quarter. We had explained in detail, so you need to keep these in mind.
Now what is that fourth quarter, Turiya? What is that that is the complete, the whole. This is Mandukya Upanishad Mantra 7.

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नान्तःप्रज्ञं न बहिष्प्रज्ञं नोभयतःप्रज्ञं न प्रज्ञानघनं न प्रज्ञं नाप्रज्ञम् ।

अदृष्टमव्यवहार्यमग्राह्यमलक्षणं अचिन्त्यमव्यपदेश्यमेकात्मप्रत्ययसारं प्रपञ्चोपशमं शान्तं शिवमद्वैतं

चतुर्थं मन्यन्ते स आत्मा स विज्ञेयः ॥ (Mantra 7)

Turiya is not that which is which is conscious of the internal (subjective) world, nor that which is conscious of the external (objective) world , nor that which is conscious of both, nor that which is a mass of all sentiency , nor that which is simple consciousness, nor that which is insentient. It is unseen (by any sense organ) , not related to anything, incomprehensible (by the mind) , uninferable, unthinkable, indescribable, essentially of the nature of Consciousness constituting the Self alone, negation of all phenomena, the Peaceful, all Bliss, and Non-DUal. This is what is known as the fourth (Turiya). This is the Atman and it has to be realised.

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This is a beautiful Mantra and I would request all of you to memorise this mantra.
Now what I am discussing here will be based on Sankaracharya's commentary and further explanation by Ananda Giri who was a great scholar and he wrote explanatory comments of Shankaracharya.

So Turiya is **नान्तःप्रज्ञं न बहिष्प्रज्ञं** (nāntaḥ-prajñam, na bahiṣ prajñam) - na means not. It is described as not this not this not this…why? Can you say like "my father in heaven"?or as Islam says "La Ilaha illallah"..Allah is the only God. Why can't you be just specific and say it is this. And now it is that some people have become Krishna devotees and say Krishna is the God, Krishnastu Bhagwan Swayam. Why can't you say that?
Does it mean that you people are misleading? No. This - not this not this - is being used not to mislead the students, not to mislead the readers. Why? Because Turiya does not admit of a description of even an indication by means of words or by any other means, whether be affirmative or negative, because language fails to express it. This is a very important argument. Those of you who are interested in Vedanta should know. Actually when people of different religions or sacred books of Hindu religion talk about God, it is to create a feeling in the mind that God exists. But when Vedanta says, not this, not this, it means that God is existent but there cannot be a pointer to it. We need to understand that God being Super-conscious, God being beyond the empire of mind, God being beyond relative existence,

cannot be termed by any word, any expression or any other thing. We will be having more of it in this mantra itself.

Does it mean that it is shunya or Void as the Buddhist would say?No it is not that. This not this not this is being used simply because, to make you realise that if there is some kind of imagination not this not this, there has to be a substratum. When you talk about, this is not water, this mirage, you mean to say that there is a substratum, although that is not water. Without substratums there cannot be any kind of imagination, any kind of understanding. Even if you are just hinting at something, if you are trying to make a kid understand something you have to take help of something concrete. Only then imagination can work. However if you say that there is a substratum, and there is an imagination, why not link them? But they cannot be linked, because whenever you want to link something, for example here is my pen and we have this linking, this cap of this is pen. There is something common between them. Because there is something in common so we can link.

Here I am touching this microphone, my hand is touching this microphone. How is it possible, because there is something common. The power to to touch and this power to be touched, this is the common factor. My hand is not this microphone and yet there is something common between them.

However when it comes to Atman and this world, there is nothing common. Atman is pure consciousness and everything in this world is insentient i.e., Jara. There being no commonality, there being nothing common between the two, so you cannot bind them. For example, when we speak a word, when I say microphone, there is some link between the word microphone and the actual microphone. At least in sanskrit they use words to denote the property of that object. However when it comes to Atman, when it comes to Brahman, when it comes to God, there is nothing common with this world. There is no way that you can link these two.

In earlier times, they used to have a pot which they would put in the well, with the help of a rope to take the water out. They say rajju ghatvat. Vat means “like”. Vat is a favourite term in Sanskrit. You can tie a rope around the pot, because there is something in common. But there is nothing common between Atman and this world, and so, this relationship itself is non-existent.

There is a substratum, because every imagination requires a substratum, every understanding requires substratum, however there is no real link between the two. There is no real link between the desert and the water of that mirage. In the same way this Atman, Turiya,, about which it is said as Na antaPrajman, Na bahsiprajnam, cannot be an object of any other instrument of knowledge. Because there is no Upadhi. When we know something, whenever we know something, there is some upadhi, something superimposed, some quality about it and we grasp it through that quality.

Now subject and object they cannot meet. Actually they cannot. Although they talk about objects and subjects. However objects create some sensation, whenever they come in contact with us. But one object cannot create the same kind of sensation in me and also in you. So what we perceive in this world is individualistic, extremely subjective. Because the actual objectivity is lacking. However when it comes to Atman, that is Turiya, there is no upadhi, the linking factor is missing.When you taste sugar, sugar has some property that excites certain properties of the tongue. So there is something in common, there is some upadhi, some property of the sugar that excites our tongue.

Normally when we talk about upadhis, the most important is noun and those of you who have some idea of English grammar or any grammar, you will know that most important is common noun, for example human being, man. Then there is proper noun where a specific name is used. Then sometimes they have concrete noun for example earth, where you know through one of your senses. Then we have abstract noun where there are ideas and qualities and there is collective noun for example crowd. Atman does not have any of these properties, so it cannot be a noun. It does not have any distinctive quality, for example when you talk about red horse, red car, green car, there is some property. Atman does not have any quality. It does not have any generic property. As in say, common noun. It does not have any specific characteristic as in say proper noun. Nor does it have any distinctive feature, as in say adjective. Nor does it have any distinctive activity, unlike when you say fast running horse, where there is a distinctive activity. So neither there is any noun, nor there is any adjective, nor any verb, so how can you know it, how can you name it? There is no way.

What would you like to have with this kind of thing, Turiya? Isn't it as useless as horns of hair? This is a favourite example of Vedanta to describe something non-existent - horns of hair, as hairs don't have horns. There is a famous Bengali expression “Ghorar Dim” meaning eggs of a horse. This is non-existent. There cannot be any use. Like Hydrogen gas, colourless, tasteless, odourless. In earlier times in Belur Math they used to prepare a particular curry. And the joke amongst the monks about that curry (I am talking of 50-60 years back) was that it was like Brahman, colourless, tasteless, odourless. No quality nothing, so what will we do with such an Atman? Which is of no quality?

But Atman is very important to know. Because once you gain the knowledge of this, when you know that this fourth is Atman, Turiya is Atman, it completely destroys your hankering for objects. This is the most important thing about religion. Who comes to religion? One who says that I am sick of running after this world. I don't want it any more. Religion, true religion is only for them. Swami Vivekanada has beautifully said that one comes to religion when there is tremendous dissatisfaction from the present state of affairs. Unless you have reached that state, where you have tremendous dissatisfaction from the present state of

affairs, know that religion is not meant for you.

Although in Gita we come across about four categories of people who are interested in religion. Those who are curious about it, people who want to get something, people who are in misery and finally people who want to know the truth. However, even in that case, all these four conditions imply that there is nothing that one expects from this world. You say I have had enough. I am sick of it. Unless you have reached that state, religion is not meant for you. And that is why Hindus do not convert, Hindus do not proselytise. Why? Because they feel that, give them some basic habits, and as far as religion is concerned, a person will come to religion only when he has developed complete distaste for the world. Till he develops complete distaste, religion is not meant for him.

What does this knowledge of Atman do? It completely removes your desire to run after the objects. So you are studying the Upanishads, you are teaching the Upanishads, and if you are still running after name and fame,if you are still running after females and if you are still running after wealth, there is something seriously wrong with you, be it the teacher or the listeners. Something is seriously wrong. In one word you are a fraud.

So the knowledge of Atman completely uproots your desire to run after the world. How? Swami Vivekananda had given a beautiful example of this. Once he was asked in Rajasthan or Gujarat, he was staying at a place he used to see the desert and water and one day he was walking towards that side and he remembered that there was a pond and he kept walking and then suddenly he realised that Oh! This is not a pond. This is a mirage. He turned back. The next day onwards, he used to see the mirage again and knew this was not water but mirage. I personally remember , when I was kid, I was travelling by a bus and that was my first experience of a mirage, and I used to feel there was water on the road. I said, "Look, there is so much water on the road. “ and the bus is going to plunge in that water. The person who was accompanying me laughed and said it is marichika, mirage. It took some time for me to realise. And that mirage was continuously going back. I felt it was pretty funny. I was hardly 7 or 8 then. But when you see a mirage for the first time, it does not appear to you like a mirage. You feel this ought to be real. This world is a mirage. It attracts you. Once you have understood what is Turiya, once you have understood what is Atman, this false perception, this ignorance vanishes forever. There can never be any misapprehension after that.

So why do you say it is illusory? This illusory nature of this world is due to ignorance which is called Maya. No one knows why this ignorance comes, no one has an answer. Where from this Maya comes, and because of which the conscious, the Atman appears as the world is actually illusory. So, the idea that Atman should be described as **नान्तःप्रज्ञं न बहिष्प्रज्ञं** - is nothing wrong. That is the way to describe Atman instead of specifically telling father in

Heaven. Definitely Father in heaven is correct, because an ordinary person won't understand this language.

But Upanishads are not meant for everybody. Upanishads are meant for a chosen few. Those of you who know something about the spiritual history of India, would remember that the Vedas were confined to Brahmins. Upanishads were further confined and were meant for a chosen few, even amongst the Brahmins. Upanishads are not meant for all.

So the explanation to the mantra comes.

In the mantra Ataman is being described. The essence of Atman, the nature of Atman, what is Atman, who am I , who you are? The quest, who am I? So Mandukya Upanishad says स आत्मा स विज्ञेयः - you are that. Who? I am Swami Samarpanananda, I know so well.

But you are not that. You are identifying yourself with the waking state right now because you are speaking. Actually you are nāntaḥ-prajñam, na bahiṣ prajñam, nobhayataḥ-prajñam na prajnañā-ghanam, na prajñam, nā aprajñam - and because of that there are six characteristics mentioned.

नान्तःप्रज्ञं न बहिष्प्रज्ञं नोभयतःप्रज्ञं न प्रज्ञानघनं न प्रज्ञं नाप्रज्ञम् ।

Turiya is not that which is which is conscious of the internal (subjective) world, nor that which is conscious of the external (objective) world , nor that which is conscious of both inner or outer, nor that which is a mass of consciousness , nor that which is simply consciousness, nor is it unconsciousness.

Six traits are given here all in negation. This is so beautiful. If you can feel the majesty and immensity of this mantra. It is not external consciousness, It is not inner consciousness, nor it is in between, nor it is simply consciousness, nor it is non-consciousness. So this is neti neti , not this not this. This is a favourite way of Upanishads to teach what Atman is. Because there is no real relation between Atman and this world, that is why no expression is used. And yet you cannot say that, it does not exist. Because the three states are there waking, dream and dreamless, because those states are there, that shows that there has to be a substratum. There has to be a platform. This is a very important argument. So we will take up each word.

Na antaprajnam - Turiya this fourth it says Atma Savijneyah. That is Atman that is what you are and that is to be known, the only thing to be known in this world is Turiya. So although we are running after this external world for “we have to be this, we have to be that, we must attain this”. But Mandukya says no. only thing to be known in Atman. sa ātmā, sa vijñeyaḥ, And caturtham manyante - Caturtham, this is the fourth. So Turiya is not Taijasa, Na antah prajnam. We mentioned earlier, Taijasa is internal consciousness. Inner consciousness. And Turiya is Na Bahisprajnam - it is not Visva. Na Ubhayataprajna. - it is a beautiful thing. I

was studying Mandukya Karika for the first time, in 1986 when I was a young Brahmachari.I still remember this Na Ubahyataprajnam. I distinctly remember my teacher was explaining Na Ubhayataprajnam. It is in between states. Surprisingly I heard what many of the Vedantin say and they make a mess of the explanation of Ubhayataprajnam. Ubhayataprajnam is the in-between state when you are neither awake nor dreaming - sometimes you might have seen that you are wading into the dream and suddenly there is a jerk in your leg. Psychologists are explaining these things in various ways. This is that intermediate stage, when you are neither awake fully nor you are dreaming. So this is a kind of day dreaming state. In day dreaming you are awake and keep on imagining in such a way that you forget the external world. So you are neither in this nor in that state. Half of this, half of that.

Na Prajnanghanam - it is not no prajna. The fourth, Atman, Turiya is neither waking , nor dreaming, nor in between nor in deep sleep. Na prajnam - Prajnam is consciousness, when you get the complete picture. This is a special power that is only with God. God is pure consciousness. So he can get a complete picture. We don't get a complete picture. So the explanation is Turiya cannot simultaneously cognise the entire world of consciousness. It cannot. But Ishwara can. So it is **न प्रज्ञं na Prajnam**.

नाप्रज्ञम् - Na aprajnam - It is not inert it is not that it does not have consciousness, so it has consciousness and yet it is not mass of consciousness. It cannot take everything simultaneously. Nor it is external, nor it is internal, nor it in between and so not this not that no that …

What happens to an ignorant person? Here I am an ignorant person. I don't know Atman ? I can tell you I don't know Atman. Ignorant persons , ordinary persons have to depend entirely on scriptures for this kind of knowledge. Fully we have to depend because we move in those three states, waking dream, dreamless. And what this Mandukya Upanishad is saying, is to examine the three states. As I mentioned earlier, there was a great monk in Haridwar, not of the Ramakrishna Mission and once a senior monk of the Ramakrishna Mission gave him a book to read. He said, I don't read books any more. I am focussed only on three books of life waking, dream and dreamless, Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupti. Now what the Upanishad is saying here and doing here is for an ordinary person like us. It is coming up with these three states to give a very clear picture of Atman, (kind of) transform. Actually Atman cannot transform, pure consciousness cannot transform. Yet it appears to have transformed. Because if Atman were not connected with these three states, (This is a very very important argument) then there was no way of knowing Turiya and no other instrument of knowledge would be left for the realisation of Turiya. Prajnanghana - means deep sleep state. It is a technical term. Means mass of consciousness. The dreamless state.

Now if these three states were not dependent on Atman then there was no way to know because there will be absolutely no way that you can know Turiya, by any other means. How do you know Atman then? Can any religion say that there is a proof of God? or can any religion give the slightest inkling why I should believe in his or her God? The answer is No. Only Mandukya Upanishad & Karika have the answer. Analyse these three states and you will see how your “I”-ness continues through those three states. In the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Ramakrishna at one place says analyse who you are and you will see that through these three states you alone continue , you alone exist.

There is absolutely no way to know God. Either if you believe in scriptures or you realise yourself. There is no third way. Now I don't have realisation. I don't want to believe in your scripture. Now what is the way out? Only Mandukya Upanishad has the way out and will say that analyse the three states and you will understand that there is one “I” continuing. Of course as far as the final truth is concerned, for that you have to depend on the words of the scriptures. But at least it gives you some opening. Other books just cannot give you any opening. They will say that either you believe it or as the Queen in Alice in the wonderland says “off with his head”.

So if this is not practised and understand the three states then the problem comes that reality becomes a void - Shunya. Buddhists have this problem of Shunya. If you do not accept these three states, if you do not want to understand the implication of these three states, you will be left with the reality as a complete void, shunya. And that is what Buddhists did.

Because absolutely no reality remains when you remove all the upadhis or superimpositions. When we want to know something we put some superimposition. If you remove all the superimpositions nothing remains, only pure consciousness remains. There is no way that you can relate to pure consciousness. The mind can never relate to pure consciousness. So you need to have something in between. The idea of three states is that in between.

Usually one mistakenly identifies Atman as antahprajnam, subjective consciousness. Nowadays neuro-scientists are moving away from objectivity and speak of subjective consciousness. When they are studying this consciousness, when the issue of consciousness is coming, they are continuously talking about subjectivity without realising that real consciousness which is Atman is na antaprajnam. It is not the subjective reality, no it is not. So, Atman is actually all the three states , however when we identify Atman with these three states actually we are somewhere mistakenly identifying because in ultimate analysis these three states are not as real as Atman itself is. For example the coin and the quarters. The quarters are imagined, quarters are not real, the rupee is real, the quarters are imagined. You imagine four quarters and you say this is one,, this is two, this is three and this is whole. Actually these things require a little bit of contemplation. This is not

actually that difficult. It is not that complicated. So, once you negate all the upadhis, and what is the best upadhi to study Atman. Waking, dream,dreamless - the three states. This microphone is also an upadhi on Atman but that is something we cannot understand. When I am talking of this pen is also an upadhi on pure Atman. However we cannot understand that. We cannot reach that level.

So, Sri Ramakrishna describes how he had nirvikalpa samadhi and he also had that special state of Samadhi where he could see this world and he could also see the pure consciousness, where he was seeing everything as pure consciousness. Now we cannot have that. However each one of us has a very clear idea of these three states. So it is very easy for us to relate and understand. These three states , which appear real to us, are actually not real. These are actually superimpositions on Atman. So, these two things, that is negation, that is superimposition on Atman and this appearance of unreal phenomenon, take place simultaneously because if it does not happen, then it will continue forever. That means this will depend on that and that will again depend on something else.

So no additional instrument of knowledge is required after this. Because no instrument of knowledge, whatever be the kind of knowledge, whether that be your senses, whether that be arguments, whether that be scriptures, nothing can help you realise Atman, realise Turiya, understand Atman. This is something in Hindu religion you repeatedly come across this statement. If you want to understand Atman either you have to believe in scriptures,mind it, the term is “believe” or you have to go by self-analysis through this understanding of the states. Otherwise there is no way you can know about God. There is no way you can know about self. So, as far as scriptures are concerned, says that scriptures also say that Turiya is only to negate. When we were discussing the fourth state we are using it to negate the other three states. It is not to affirm something. Once you have understood it, once we have realised it, that is more than enough. As far as understanding Turiya is concerned, neither you can know it through your senses, nor you can know it through arguments. Nor can it be attained through Yog.

As Anandagiri says beautifully that even contemplation etc which are essential features of Yog, cannot establish Turiya because it cannot be proved that Yogic contemplation can yield such knowledge. If you study Yog, if you study Yog philosophy, you will see that they say slowly your mind becomes calm, Mind becoming calm and self realisation these two take place simultaneously. Nothing can take you to God. Anything, be it Japam, be it meditation, be it scripture study, nothing. in Hindu scriptures you come across this statement repeatedly. Neither can you know God through your senses, nor can you know God through argument, nor can any spiritual practice ever take you to God or to Atman. They just remove certain obstacles.

These states, waking, dream and dreamless, are really of the essence of consciousness,

actually it is pure consciousness, and they are non-different from each other. Why? Because they are all pure Atman and one state negates the other. If waking was the true state, Bahisprajnam, if Atman had been bahisprajnam,and by definition, Atman is something that is permanent then the waking state would not have been negated. This is a very simple argument. Actually this mantra begins with Na antaprjman, na bahisprajnam , we are in search of something that is permanent and yet the waking state is getting negated by dream state and dream is being negated by dreamless and dreamless is negated by the waking state. And waking state negates both. Where is the permanence? I am in search of permanence, I am in search of that which will relieve me completely of my thirst for objects.So I must know something that is permanent. These three states are not permanent. But pure consciousness never changes, because it is being said it is not this, not this, not this.

But an objection is raised saying that consciousness is seen to change in deep sleep. The answer is no. Consciousness continues in deep sleep and that is why when you come out of deep sleep you remember, you say “Oh! I slept so well”. And in the Vedas and Upanishads also they mention this thing that knowledge of the knower is never absent. Atman is the knower. Knower in the sense of ultimate consciousness. It never becomes absent. Even in deep sleep it continues.

What exactly is reality? When you examine the three states, that is the speciality of Mandukya Upanishad, you realise that they change, they are changing and worse they are negatable. However the consciousness which is there underlying the three states is unchangeable, it is the “I”-ness that continues through all the three. That is constant, that is variable, that is Atman. That is your true you, pure consciousness. That is the real and you are that. Earlier it was mentioned that it is like the horn of a hair, a useless thing. It is not so. Indeed as far as its nature is concerned, it is Adrishtam, indeed it is adṛiṣtam, avyavahārayam, agrāhyam, alakṣaṇam, acintyam, avyapadeśyam. It is unperceived, unrelated, incomprehensible, un-inferable, unthinkable and indescribable. That is the real and you are that. Earlier it was mentioned that it is like the horn of a hair, a useless thing. It is not so. Indeed as far as its nature is concerned, it is Adrishtam, indeed it is adṛiṣtam, avyavahārayam, agrāhyam, alakṣaṇam, acintyam, avyapadeśyam. It is unperceived, unrelated, incomprehensible, un-inferable, unthinkable and indescribable. Again six qualities come. It is unseen and so **adrishtam a**s it cannot be seen.

It cannot be grasped by the senses, it is master of the three states, the servant cannot control the master. Atman is the experiencer, it can never become experienced. So none of the senses can master it. Incomprehensible, mind cannot grasp it, so it is **aagrahyam**

It is unrelated and so **avyavaharayam.**. We mentioned how it is real and everything else is unreal. Turiya cannot be comprehended by the mind. Turiya cannot be comprehended by

the senses. Nor can you infer because to infer you need to have some common points. So Atman is un-inferable - **alaksanam**. For example you are inside your room and there was rain and you come out and you see that the earth is wet and you conclude that water wets so there was rain. There has to be some common ground, there is no common ground and so it is un-inferable. And for all these reasons it is unthinkable (**acintayam**) that the mind cannot grasp it and hence it is indescribable (**avyavaharayam.**).

These two expression यतो वाचो निवर्तन्ते। अप्राप्य मनसा सह (Yato Bacha nivartante .aprapya mansa saha- (from Taittiriya Upanishad)),neither mind can grasp it nor words can express it. To express anything by words first you need to grasp it by the mind. But you cannot have these things with Atman.

Ekātma-pratyaya-sāram, now they are saying something positive about Atman so that we can form some idea. It is pure consciousness, nature of consciousness consisting of self the "I"- ness. - Ekatma. Pratyay Saram - consciousness is the eternal weakness, it is the eternal knower. So, says that Turiya should be known by spotting that consciousness that never changes in these three states. "I"- remains constant - ekatma prataya - prataya is consciousness. Ekatman means one. **Prapañcopaśamam** - Prapancha - this world is prapancha - illusion , grand illusion, It makes us run after things. Nowadays in management they ask, what is your dream? I am already fed up with my dreams when I sleep, and now you want me to dream even in the waking state? This is what materialism has done to us. They want us to dream even in the waking state. Once you know your true nature, this illusion ceases. - Prapañcopaśamam. So the attributes which characterises the three states are negated. Quite disturbing.

Shantam, Shivam, Advaitam - Shantam - hence it is ever peaceful. Because prapanca is gone, the illusion is gone.

Shantam is peaceful, Shivam is all bliss and Advaitam is one.

Once I had been to Jamshedpur. There was a young boy who was showing magic. I loved. I loved them. Slowly I understood how he is doing all these. After two three years once again I went there and the same boy was showing all those tricks. I laughed, I clapped, I did everything, but I knew those tricks. Once you know that these are all illusions you may clap, you may not clap, you may like, you may not like, but you will not be deluded by it.

This is theoretical knowledge. Actual knowledge comes only in the state of Samadhi. Only when you have reached that state of oneness, actual knowledge comes only in Samadhi. What we explained earlier was the preparation to give you an idea of what Atman is.

So what is the utility of knowing this Atman? It is Shantam, Shivam, Advaitam. You become conscious of one undivided consciousness. There will not be any illusion because there is no illusion is Atman, It should be known.

So Atman has been described in various Upanishadic passages as unseen but the seer, and the consciousness of the you become calm, because you become calm you enjoy the bliss, Shivam. Unless you are calm you won't enjoy life. To enjoy life you need to get out of excitement . Real enjoyment comes only when you are calm, only when your mind is calm. Otherwise it doesn't come.

sa ātmā, sa vijñeyaḥ means this indeed seer is never absent. Consciousness is always there. You are always conscious of yourself. So you are actually never moving away from your atmajnan. The only problem is that you do not know your true self. What do the Upanishads say? You don't have to believe in some God who is in heaven. You don't have to believe in Narayan, or Shiva or Kali. You don't have to believe in a God who is moving around with a sword in his hand. You only have to know yourself. Know thyself. Know thyself.

It is not that you don't know yourself. You know yourself in your waking state, you know yourself in the dream state, you know yourself in the dreamless state. However these states are imagined. Not real. Had they been real, they would have been permanent. Had they been permanent they wouldn't have been negated. Because they are being negated, they are not permanent. And yet the idea of "I" remains. That "I" is actually the fourth, but it is not fourth in the sense that this is the fourth part. It is metaphorically said fourth.

This is Atman, this is to be known. If I know, what do I gain? Shantam Shivam Advaitam. Become full of peace, full of joy and you now have undivided consciousness.

However You cannot know it by any other means. You cannot know it through senses, inferences nor you can know it through mind, nor can it be expressed nor can it be taught to you nor can it be acquired through Yogic practices. In Samadhi also there is a complete cessation of mind. You cannot say that self knowledge can be attained through this because It is not a product of any cause.

So this is in brief the nature of Atman. This is your true "I" ness. This is what you are.

Now we shall move to Karikas based on this Mantra

11. The End of Misery - beyond the mind

We name this topic beyond mind because Mandukya Karika is about consciousness. Consciousness has nothing to do with the mind. The best and the nearest that comes between consciousness and mind is stated in Raja Yog, where mind is seen as a reflection of consciousness.

However, in Mandukya Karika, which is based on Mandukya Upanishad, the mind will be seen as the three states of Waking, Dream and Sleep. So dream is a state. And by sleep we

will mean dreamless. So, the mind is characterised by these three states.
What is consciousness? What is Atman? That which is beyond these three. That is beyond mind. It is very important to understand the mind and consciousness. Consciousness as we understand in India, we as in Vedanta, we as in Hindu religion, is not related to this mind, to this world in any way. At best you can say that the mind is mere reflection, just a reflection of consciousness.
However, Mandukya Upanishad will go deeper and it will remove every kind of duality. So you cannot say that there is consciousness and there is mind. Because that itself will mean duality.
Mind as we already said means the three states, waking, dream and sleep. Consciousness has nothing to do with these states. However since we are aware of these three states, what the Upanishad says is that consciousness or Turiya or Atman is the substratum, the base, it is like the ocean on which you have the waves. How real are the waves? That depends on your understanding, depends on how you want to look at things. But actually waves have no reality, absolutely no reality. We are going to discuss it now, and from now onwards it can be extremely unsettling. The kind of belief, the kind of faith with which you have grown can be challenged and shakened. When I first heard and studied this Upanishad, way back in 1986 for the first time, I was even kind of shaken. And unless you are well grounded, in your life, in your spiritual life, Mandukya Upanishad can unsettle you.
Now Gaudapada's Karika is an explanation to Upanishads. Upanishads themselves are records of realisations, which the masters, the great sages, not one, but many great sages realised and the truth was passed onto their disciples and they recorded it. The statements of Vedas and Upanishads are known as mantras. And everything else is known as sloka. So we don't say sloka of the Upanishad. Now every mantra of the Upanishads are truths. But they need explanation. And thorough explanations, the whole thing is made as rational, as coherent as they can be. They are not trying to prove anything, because they are discussing something that cannot be proved. We use the expression that consciousness is beyond mind. Now what is beyond mind? How can you talk of something beyond mind? This idea itself is so explosive that most scientists will not even want to even discuss it. However, It does not matter whether one discusses or not.
Think of Darwin's theory of evolution. How many people have accepted it? But now it is more or less accepted by everyone except some states in America. Americans are strange people. They consider themselves extremely scientific and rationalist, and they are not willing to accept that earth was created much more than 6000 years ago because according to the Bible, earth was created around 4000 BC. And Darwin's theory of creation is a strict no no. This is not the way to talk. In India we don't have issues with such things. The domain of science belongs to science, the domain of spirituality belongs to the spiritual leader. We

don’t let one overlap the other’s field, the other's area of expertise. And we accept both. That is spiritual persons have no difficulty in accepting scientific things and scientific truths. And science has absolutely no difficulty in accepting spirituality.

Now, in Mantra 7, Na Prajnam is also mentioned. Prajna normally means consciousness, however in that mantra, as discussed, the meaning of Prajnam is a bit different. Acharya Shankar comments Prajnam as the power to see the whole thing, the entire thing in one go. This power belongs to God only. So this Turiya is not God, because God also belongs to the world of mind. That is so disturbing! Can you imagine? Can you think of telling it to devotees that your God belongs to the empire of mind? There will be bloodshed, particularly if you say this to the followers of a particular religion. The moment you name your God, whatever name you give, you have brought your God to the empire of mind, to the world of mind. So it is not Prajnam. Prajnam here does not mean ordinary consciousness, but special, it means the power of consciousness to take the entire thing in one go. This power belongs only to God.

Now. Atman is the fourth state, which is Turiya. Now this Atman which is beyond mind, is compared with mind.

Karika 10 to 18 discusses the difference between Atman and mind and how Atman is not mind. What is beyond mind has nothing to do with mind. This is a very interesting section. However you need to keep in mind that what we shall be discussing about mind here is not the normal discussion regarding mind. That is if you want to know about what mind is, I will request you to listen to our Raja Yog talks, from our playlist. Listen on that topic, what is mind.

Here by mind we mean the three states: waking dream and sleep. Atman has nothing to do with these three states. So these three states are in the mind. Turiya, the Atman is beyond the mind. What exactly we mean by beyond has been mentioned in the Mantra 7 and how that beyond is related to the mind, will now be discussed. It is a very important discussion.

So we begin Gaudapada’s Karika no 10.

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निवृत्ते : सर्वदुःखानामीशानः प्रभुरव्ययः ।

अद्वैतः सर्वभावानां देवस्तुर्यो विभुः स्मृतः ॥ (Karika 10)

In it, indicated as the changeless and the Supreme Lord, there is a cessation of all miseries. It is the one without a second,among all entities. It is known as Turiya (Fourth) , effulgent and all pervading.

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If you have a chance to interact with Sadhus and Mahatmas of Uttarakhand, that is Haridwar and above, they love to study Mandukya Karika and they love much more to quote from Mandukya Karika. It has an appeal. So attractive.

निवृत्ते : सर्वदुःखानामीशानः प्रभुरव्ययः -Turiya the fourth state which is not really a state, is the changeless ruler. It never changes. Unlike the mind which is sometimes working as waking,

sometimes as sleeping and at other times as dreaming, Turiya never changes. Changeless ruler who never changes, unlike say in India or America, head of the state changes, President changes, Prime Minister changes. But not Turiya. It never changes. Why should I go for it? Nivritte Sarvadukhanam - being the king it is capable of destroying all your miseries. Are you miserable? Are you in pain? Do you ever feel sadness? Do you ever feel sorrow? How to destroy it? The way a King of a Nation can remove your miseries born of poverty, just like that. Advaita, Turiya can remove all your miseries once and for all. What is misery? By misery I am using the term misery which will mean, sadness, sorrow, pain and all those words taken together. The general term in Sanskrit is Dukhha. Sanskrit words do not have an exact equivalent in English. So, we are using the single word Dukkha, which implies sorrow, sadness, pain etc and all those things.

In Hindu traditions we say that Dukkha is sorrow, comes in three different formats or rather it has three platforms through which pain enters. First is when pain comes from within, your own body mind complex and is called Adhyatmik. Second is what comes from seen and unseen creatures, like snakes, animals, wicked people and it is called Adhi Bhoutik. And the third is when pain comes from the divine, like floods, earthquakes etc and it is Adhi Daibik. But the real cause of pain are Shoka and Moha, which are Loss and Fear of loss respectively. Shok is when you lose something. Moha is when you fear some loss.

What is loss? Your identity. You identify with certain things, certain persons, certain ideas, it can be anything objects, persons or ideas.

We have Sean, a wonderful participant in our online classes. He is in a very advanced state of cancer and he says that he is getting treated but this Indian system of thought and the entire Indian outlook has helped him hugely in recovering. This is because somehow he has been able to withdraw his mind from his body. That means under normal conditions we identify so much with our body, mind, ego and our surroundings that we are continuously shedding tears over some loss or fear of loss. We are fearful that we may lose. The moment you have that fear that we may lose, actually you think that you will be losing your identity. What happens when you die? You think you will be losing your identity. But are you really losing your identity? Maybe, If you are a materialistic person, if you are a so-called materialist, that is the scientific community of present days and communists and all those things. But if you are a true Christian or a true Muslim or a true Hindu, you will not be scared of death. Why should you be scared of death if you have done good karma, if you have been true to your religion, a better life awaits you. So why bother? You may be losing your friends and relatives etc but you are definitely not going to lose your individuality. Why feel sad? All these problems come because we are all badly identified with the mind. Mind in its three formats waking, dream and sleep.

When you were a kid, you know sometimes in a dream you saw that you were not able to

reach the school and you got up crying because a kid cannot differentiate between dream state and waking state. Dreamless or sleep is something entirely different. As we grow, one very important thing we learn is to differentiate between waking and dreaming. Also between waking and daydreaming. Daydreaming and dreaming are equally bad, but the real bad thing is to identify yourself with that.

Now how to get rid of that pain?

Three platforms or the three cannons that are fired at us which cause pain are Adhyatmic Adhibhoutic and Adhidaivik, and result in shok and moha. The cyclone comes and goes. Someone's house gets blown away. He is not only attached to the house, but he has to build a new house. And he has no money.There will naturally be pain for it. But how sad will he be and for how long?

This is what Karika says, Nivritte sarvaduhkhanam Ishanam Prabhurabyah. It is capable of destroying all miseries. Let me tell you one very popular story. I think all of you know. Shri Ramakrishan narrates it. But it is a very popular story in Indian lore. There was a fakir and once emperor Akbar met the fakir and was impressed and told him that in case he needs something he should come to the emperor and his needs will be fulfilled. So when the fakir needed some money to build a mosque or a shelter, he went to Akbar and found him praying to Allah for money and wealth. The Fakir got up, to go back. Akbar saw that and indicated to him to wait. Fakir waited and later Akbar asked the fakir why he had come and why he was going away. Fakir said he came for some money, on finding that the emperor himself is praying for money and wealth, how could he ask for money. Rather he should pray to God for money. This is a very interesting thing.

When you fall ill, should you go to God or to a doctor? Well the general tradition with devoted people is to first go to a doctor, because God alone has made these doctors. However a time comes when you find that doctors alone can do nothing about it. And then whatever has to happen God alone will do. In the monastic circles, particularly in Uttarakhand, starting from Haridwar, there is a very favourite saying that God alone is the doctor. And Gangajal alone is the medicine. So in the earlier times when medical science was not really so advanced, most monks used to take God’s name and took Ganga water as a cure and that was all. Whatever has to happen has to happen. Now however you find many monks can afford really expensive treatment. But that is not the issue. The issue is it is an individual choice ultimately. Those of you who have read Fyodor Dostoevsky’s very famous work, Brothers Karamazov, will recall that there is a character who taunts that this person could not get relief from God, so he has come to you. When I was reading that book I found it so funny, that when you go to someone you say that well I pray to God, I did not get any relief and that is why I have come to you. It is a very interesting statement. Well that is what makes people like Dostoevsky great minds. Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Chekhov , they were really

great minds. Because they see things differently. Now only we say that when medicine does not work, doctors do not work, you go to God. Dostoevsky is putting things entirely differently.

However, Nivritte sarvaduhkhanam Ishanam Prabhurabyah, the changeless ruler,when it comes to routing out the evil, routing out the misery, is the Lord. We do need to believe in this.

The best way to understand these things is to study the biography of Sri Ramakrishna. There is no other life that can really explain scriptures in a better way. If you study Sri Ramakrishna, that is the best way. When Sri Ramakrishna started developing cancer in his throat, said that look I have reached that state, where I believe everyone or I believe none. That means God alone will cure and God alone has become all this.

However we are not talking about diseases. We are talking about Dukkha. It does not look good, while talking about Mandukya Upanishad I shall be talking about some individual, but it is through these classes that these talks I became friendly with Mr. Sean. He is listening to our talks. And I am so charmed, absolutely charmed bowled over as you say. He has cancer , 3rd degree cancer, but he is cheerful. The disease is not able to affect him any more.

This is exactly what Upanishad is talking about. Not that he is established in Advaita, but he has some understanding of spirituality. On the one hand you will say that you are a spiritual person, and on the other hand you will be miserable, this cannot happen. Swami Vivekananda is repeatedly talking about, repeatedly, these two things cannot go hand in hand. Spirituality and misery do not go hand in hand. When in America somebody asked, “Swami, don't you ever get serious. He said, "Yes , whenever I have stomach pain.” There also he gets serious but he does not get miserable.

Misery is the luxury of the worldly. Misery is the luxury of the obsessed. Those who are obsessed with the world, those who are running after wealth, fame and sex. Only they can afford to be miserable. Not the spiritual persons.

And of all these ways to get out of misery, the knowledge of advaita is the King, Royal. Nothing can match Advaita, because misery belongs to mind. Consciousness is lord of mind. Not only lord of mind, mind does not exist as far as consciousness is concerned.

Mind as we understand it as waking, dream and sleep. Not only is it inferior to consciousness, it has no existence as far as consciousness is concerned. Your misery is born out of mind. If the mind itself does not exist, where is misery ? How can you have misery? You are scared of mistaken darkness. And people come running with light and find that there is no snake. What will you be scared of now?

The world is all about misery. Why should we spend money to go watch shows of tragedy? And this is not something new. Even during Roman theatres, this thing was there and in the dialogues of Socrates you find that people pay to see tragedies. Isn't it tragic that people pay

to see tragedies? Because you relive your life.

When Dante was writing Divine comedy he painted hell in great detail, because we live in hell, earth is a living hell. But when we come across descriptions of Heaven in different scriptures, we do not get much description, while descriptions of Hell are massive. This is because we live in misery.

The mind does not have much to offer by way of happiness. But the mind has a lot to offer by way of misery. And when we don't have misery, we cannot live. And our life would become so bad that if there was only happiness, sadness and tragedy would have made a real big business.Because we love to shed tears. And if we don't have any valid reasons, we create reasons. Those of you who have read my book, Tiya know that there are the Leaktons, they just find any reason to shed tears. That is our way of life.

Those of you who have read the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishan will find that there is no misery and whenever he comes across misery he just makes fun of it. And he is full of joy. Joy comes from where? Buffoonery? No. Joy comes from being one with the divine. This is what Turiya is. Advaita. Consciousness. Beyond mind, beyond misery, King of mind, ruler of everything, everything that belongs to the world of duality. Mind is duality, Turiya is King of mind not because it can dictate but because it shows that duality does not exist. Believe me these are too powerful things. And it is not just about belief. Let me share something very personal. Lord Jesus is my favourite, I just love Lord Jesus, because spirituality is so condensed in Him, at least the way we see Him in the Bible. Just think of him telling you about the Kingdom of Heaven, and the Kingdom of Heaven being within you and Father in Heaven. Can you imagine the impact that it would create amongst the believers and the non-believers. And he was surrounded by non-believers only. People of Galilee, what would they have understood? Nothing, big cypher, zero. And His disciples, how much they had appreciated and understood?Nothing really.

Spirituality is for Indians. Only we Indians can appreciate it. We know what it means to be told Father in Heaven and Kingdom of Heaven is within you. But even then, are we really in a state to appreciate this? Advaita alone removes misery and is the King, Prabhu, Lord. And why?

अद्वैतः सर्वभावानां देवस्तुर्यो विभुः स्मृतः - Advaita Sarvabhanam devasturuyo Viubhuh smritah -

All other entities other than Turiya, that is pure consciousness are unreal, absolutely unreal. Waking in unreal, Dream is unreal , sleep is unreal. Because you will have to wake up. In Ramayana Valmiki the great sage poet came up with a wonderful character of Kumbhakarna , who sleeps for six months, gets up to eat and sleeps again. See his pathetic life. That is the beauty of poets who can create characters which have no resemblance in the real world. However we have a resemblance here, that he slept for six months but he had to get up.

That means even the deep sleep state is unreal. You have to come to the waking. And you may see a beautiful dream, dreaming of this and that, but will have to wake up. And however active you may be, you may be like a dog whose tail is on fire, but you will have to take rest, you will have to sleep. And your mind has to go into a dream state without it you will not find any peace. So unreal. Ever changing.

In the story of Akbar the emperor, we discussed earlier, he also has wants. God is beyond all this. Real peace, real rest comes with God, not with Emperor Akbar. We cannot practise it. But simply because we cannot practise it, simply because we don't appreciate it, does not mean that it is not the truth.

In the book called “From Dawn to Decadence” by Jacques Barzun,he discusses the rise of Western civilization and the decline of it. What really happened? Now when just look at the Western Civilization through science, you will know, how something that was fought against, they were not ready to believe is now a reality that every child knows. So simply because it's not being accepted and appreciated does not mean it is not true. Simply because of these teenagers who have absolutely no idea of what religion and spirituality is , they go on telling that we don't believe in God and we are spiritual but not religious. Well these people don't make religion. Religion is something far deep.

Turiya the fourth, that is Atman, is non-dual. It is effulgent and all pervading. This is not something coming from logic. It is a reality that is being described. Anyone who has experienced that knows it. Acharya Shankar says that, Turiya i.e. Atman lights up everything. This is an expression that you will find in every Upanishad. Atman gives light to everything. Light of consciousness. Let me remind you once again that we are not talking about something through logic. We are telling you the truth. The Truth that was experienced by the Masters. You know there is a very funny story about Marco Polo. It is said that, on his voyage all round he reached China and was surprised to see Chinese civilization and he saw lots of things and he wrote books. And people thought that he was mad, he was crazy and he was put into jail so that he could be kept separate from the common man. And then he was asked to apologise and he was asked to say that these are all his imagination. Marco Polo said look, I have not even written 10% of what I have seen. This alone has unsettled you, imagine what will happen if I write everything.

What these masters have seen and simply because we have no idea, we have no experience, we feel that these are not correct and we come up with the question, is it scientific? Yes, it is very scientific. Absolutely scientific. You practise and you will see, Can there be anything more scientific than this. Because there is light of everything, because it is pure consciousness, it is Bibhu, (means all pervading) and Prabhu means the Lord. It is Bibhu and it is Prabhu. It is the first point to compare between Turiya and mind. That is the relationship between Turiya and Mind. Mind creates misery. Turiya erases all kinds of

Miseries.

And now Kaika no 11 onwards, relation between Turiya and the other three states of mind will be discussed. Now you will recall that the three states, waking is known as Visva, Dream as Taijasa and Sleep as Prajna. Visva, which is the waking state as far as this Karika and Upanishad is concerned, is characterised by non-apprehension - Agrahan of the reality. Here is my pen, I see this pen as a pen you will see that I am apprehending correctly, I am comprehending correctly. But No. One who knows Brahman, one who has Atmajnan will say no. It does not have any individuality as a pen.Its true identity lies in its universality as pure consciousness. In reality it is Atman as a pen, just like a wave on the ocean. So waking state,earlier it was already explained that waking state is Bahisprjnam, where consciousness becomes externalised. So there is non-apprehension.

In Taijasa there is mis-apprehension. In a dream state you get things wrong. Completely wrong.

And there is Prajna, that is the sleep state, you get non-cognition. Those who are interested can just note down these words, non-apprehension, mis-apprehension and non-cognition. Very important terms because we will be using these terms. However , because in the first two, waking and dream, the word apprehension is there, although it is non-apprehension, non-apprehension is not in the sense of non-cognition, Non-apprehension is in the sense of relative truth. We get relative truth in the waking state. We get the relative truth in the dream state. So the waking state and the dream state are superior to the sleep state. Because in a sleep state there is no apprehension. Because there is no cognition. Your mind is not taking either the truth or the untruth. It is a very interesting thing. Because sleep, that is Prajna, is a state of complete unawareness. And also Prajna that is sleep is the mother of other two states. We will be discussing all this. We are just giving you a general idea, general introduction.

And as mentioned Turiya is not at all a state. Nor is it antecedent or subsequent to any state.Now waking is followed by dream, dream is followed by sleep, sleep is again followed by dream and by waking. Turiya is not a state. Why? Neither it has any antecedent nor it has any subsequent. Remember from the beginning when we have been discussing Mandukya, we repeatedly said that Turiya is not a state, Turiya is completeness, the way that of a coin as was explained. Not the fourth but the whole. So it is like an unrelated ground of the other three states, just like the ocean and three waves. Because not three waves actually. These are three states, which you may think of as three major waves. And within each of those waves there are wavelets. Surprisingly, in these verses that we will be continuing the waking state, Visva , is equated with the dream state. Sometimes they will mention Visva as dream. Because dream is mis-apprehension of the truth.

Now see, it is a very interesting concept. When you dream, you see things that are

unbelievable and unacceptable and undoable in the waking state. So actually it is a mis-apprehension. That means when you are comprehending things, there is some kind of mis-judgement, as related to waking state. Now what about the waking state? The waking state is seeing this pen as a pen. But it is not seeing the pen as consciousness. So there is mis-apprehension here in the same way that dream has mis-apprehension. In dream mis-apprehension is of the waking state. Whatever we experience in waking state, you mis-apprehend in dream. And in the waking state, mis-apprension is of the truth. So in some way, waking and dream are related. This is very interesting and this actually gave rise to Buddhistic philosophy where very often they started talking about the world as a dream. Vedanta does not say that the world is a dream. It is Swapnavat, just like a dream. Why? Because we mis-apprehend in the dream the things of the waking, and in waking we mis-apprehend things of Atman, the reality. So, again in the sleep state we find that there is mis-apprehension and non–apprehension.

Actually normally when this Karika will describe, there are three terms coming, Non-apprehension, Mis-apprehension and non-cognition. These terms become interchangeable as we will be taking this up one after another. What they mean to say is that all these three states are bound by cause and effect. However this is not fixed, because these terms will get interchanged. So, we find that there is a similarity between waking state and dream state. Now it is very shocking. Imagine that the waking state has similarity with dream state in the sense we don't perceive things correctly. And dreamless has similarity with dream state. Because there is non-apprehension. They are kind of bound by cause and effect. The sleep state is the seed and the other two are like the tree, a fully grown tree.

So the sleep state is like the seed, dream is like sapling and waking is like a tree. However Turiya is completely beyond all this.

In Prajna, that is sleep, there is only cause. In dream there is cause and effect. In waking there is cause and effect. Atman is absolutely beyond cause and effect.

The first relation we talked about is the relationship of consciousness and mind. Mind that is waking, dream and sleep, is bound by cause and effect. This is the most important thing that we are discussing. Cause and effect, whether it be only cause , whether be only effect, whether be cause and effect , they are all bound by cause and effect.

But in pure consciousness, Turiya, there is no possibility of it. So there are two things. Mind is all about misery, Consciousness is all about removing misery. Mind is about cause and effect, consciousness is completely beyond cause and effect.

Remember two important things. First we covered Karika no 10 where it says Misery is the law of life. Turiya is the King of removal of misery. There are many ways to remove misery. But Turiya is the King.

And waking dream and sleep these three states are bound by cause and effect. That is, the

mind is bound by cause and effect. Mind means cause and effect. Mind means duality. Consciousness is completely beyond it. If you keep these two things in mind, it would be easy to continue with the next verses.
Question has been asked if there is a difference between Samadhi and Turiya? See Samadhi is a very vague term. Samadhi can be of different kinds. Turiya can be realised only in the Nirvikalpa Samadhi. Nirvikalpa Samadhi where there is no duality. There must not be any cause and effect and there should not be any kind of misery left. Even if you do not understand Nirvilkalpa samadhi and Saviklapa Samadhi and Samprajnata Samadhi and Asamprajnata Samadhi, you need to keep in mind the very simple thing, that the ultimate state in Vedanta, in Hindu tradition, is that state where there is no cause and effect left and where there cannot be any kind of misery. No misery ever. So samadhi is Turiya. Because once your mind reaches Nirvikalpa Samadhi, you become one with Atman , you realise that you are beyond all these, nothing matters with you. Absolutely nothing.

12. Original Sin and Atman

We mentioned Nivritte Sarvadukhahnam, about how to get rid of all the pain,all the sorrow. Now, before continuing with the next Karika, I would like to have a simple and very important discussion on a very important topic. How Upanishads are related to other religions. For example , there is a very popular expression, comparative religion. In comparative religion they discuss the common things and the differences. Rarely they study the main scriptures. Here we are just discussing one very small aspect of comparative religion, comparing Abrahamic religions that is Judaism, Christianity and Islam with Vedanta. And what really is the original sin. What exactly original sin is and how we see it.
Some of you may have read my book, “The World of Religions”. It is a very interesting and important book and it has been praised by the scholars too. I wrote as my self expression and that is what any author does. Now I feel that instead of continuing only with Mandukya Upanishad and Karika, let us just have a look at the comparative side of Atmajnan, Self Knowledge that is Atman as such and the concept of original sin.
The moment you hear the expression original sin, somehow you seem to shrink, you seem to feel terrified. The moment you hear about self-knowledge, suddenly there is as if an ocean of light but are these related? Can they be related? Of course yes. In fact original sin and Atmatatva, that is self knowledge are obverse and subverse of the same coin. So, I just thought we just see how self knowledge is connected with original sin.
If you look at the old testament, scholars say, there are some differences with the main

jewish text known as Torah. Mostly they are common but there are some differences. Differences in some chapters. But they both agree how the creation took place.
We are discussing creation, sustenance and dissolution in Mandukya Karika. So how do the Abrahamic religions look at this creation? So the genesis 1.1 ,which means the first sentence of the Bible says, " In the beginning God created the Heavens and the earth and the earth was formless and void". It means he split the space.So it is not the earth that we are discussing. It is the space where somebody can live. So earth is a general term here. And then Genesis says, "And darkness was over the surface of the deep". There is only darkness. This darkness is not really the absence of light. This darkness has a spiritual significance. Those of you who are really interested in understanding what this spiritual darkness means I will request you to listen to talk in the Hinduism series, Nasadiya Suktam, where it is said, it is neither sat, nor asat. And darkness covered darkness. If you listen to that talk you may get some idea about what the Bible is talking about. I don't want to criticise any religion. One very important thing is that we all should know if you are studying religion, that India has the culture of religion. To have religion, and to have a culture of religion, are two different things. We also had Aryabhatta, we also had Bhaskar, we had Brahmagupta, we had great mathematicians. But we never had the culture of science. The culture of science has come to us from Europe. Similarly, Europe has religion, Israel has religion. But the culture of religion belongs to India. Because those of you who have some idea about the history of Christianity and history of Judaism, would know how Abraham really founded Judaism but it was not known as Judaism then. It was just that there was God and slowly they kept on moving. Finally there was Moses. And Judaism started taking shape after Moses which was around one thousand years after Abraham. And in between, these Jewish people had become slaves and there was 40 years of wandering through the desert before they could reach the promised land.
When people are running around, you cannot have religion. Because religion demands peace, stability and tranquillity. Do you think America, and Europe can practise spirituality? With all due respect , with folded hands I don't mean to criticise them, those who are running, cannot have spirituality, They can have some practices, they can't even speculate. They can't have philosophy because unless you learn to sit quietly, unless you have plenty of time, as Italians say" Dolce far niente". It is a beautiful expression. It means pleasant nothingness. You are doing nothing. Unless you live with that state of mind, poetry cannot come out, speculative philosophy cannot come out, spirituality cannot come out. Those who are on the run can pray. But they cannot contemplate. That is why contemplation has been, it has been the heritage of the Aryan people, Indians. India and the subcontinent, that includes, Napal, Bangladesh, Myanmar.
So what the old testament says is that in the beginning God created Heaven and the earth.

Now the earth was formless and void. What is very interesting about the statement is, this is what is known as spiritual truth mixed with myth. Myth is something that you use to express an idea which cannot be expressed satisfactorily through words. It is a kind of symbolism where you use some kind of symbols, some kind of descriptions to outline an idea that needs to be conveyed. Basically what this statement conveyed is, in the beginning God created, implying God alone was there, nothing else was there. And then he created space. If you listen to our Inspired talks series, you will come across these expressions many times. That there is only God and then mind, time space, these three get created simultaneously, absolutely simultaneously.

However here in the Bible they are talking only about space and then very interestingly, it says that the spirit of God was hovering over the surface of the waters. It only means that the universe is not insentient. It is not Jara, the Spirit of God is there. It is a beautiful statement. We have been telling these things for ages and ages. That is what creation is. It is just an extension of God. It is not separate from God. Of course there were great philosophers in Christianity, who came up with different kinds of things, different explanations and they have schools and schools of philosophy. I get totally confused. I am basically a very simple person and as far as my knowledge is concerned I am extremely limited. Because these things bore me. Spirituality fascinates me. Now that is something scholars cannot do.

So you saw how spiritual truth is being presented through mythology. God created the space etc.

Now this very thing, this creation, how it comes to us philosophically? First we have mythology, now we have philosophy. Actually these are two very important things. In every religion mainly you have two things, Philosophy and mythology. And form this philosophy we get laws, rituals and also mythology. For the common man , religion is sacred. So everything connected with religion is sacred. The book is sacred. Every word becomes sacred and the myth too becomes sacred. This is where we lose sight of spirituality. Spirituality is all about your personal realisation. And realisation not of unseen spirits, not of unseen land but of one and only one thing, that is your oneness with God or your oneness with as they said, the spirit of God. So either you be one with God or with the spirit of God for ever. By spirit I mean pure consciousness. So here you have two aspects: God and His spirit. Spirit is here in the sense of Manifestation. So there is God who was unmanifest. He was there as pure spirit. And suddenly there is God with his spirit which is now hovering over the space.

When it comes to philosophy, you have to come again to the New testament that is popularly known as the Bible. And in this Bible, St. John when he begins, inspired talks began with that, in the beginning there was word and word was with God and the word was God. English translation is word, but the original expression must have been logos, and logos

mean word. And logos have many connotations. Many things. If you say that the word was with God, it becomes something like, in Indian tradition, where they say that God and the Vedas are one and the same. At the time of creation, the Vedas come out of the mouth of God. Because they are the spiritual principles on which this creation continues. However, according to Christian traditions here the word means Jesus Christ. So, God and Jesus are one and the same and then Jesus came. This is a philosophical thing. Now in between this is the state of creation, so when God created this space, then he created day and night and for six days He worked and then there was earth and heaven and then He created different creatures, different things and then he created Adam. And Adam was so lonely, he was all alone, so God made him unconscious and took bone out of his rib and made Eve, the female. So that is how female came out according to Abrahamic religions. And this is accepted both in Christianity and Islam because they accept this idea of creation.

Anyway, that is not our issue. Our issue is Adam and Eve were there and God said you must not eat fruit from the tree that is in the middle of the garden of Eden and you must not touch it or you will die. So God forbade them to eat from the tree of the knowledge of Good and evil. We are actually discussing something whose expressions have been forgotten long ago. It is old testament that we are discussing which is written in old Hebrew. That has been forgotten, so the words can be expressed variously just like in the Vedas. Some mischievous people of present times, it started with mischievous British and it has now come down to mischievous Indians. They go on interpreting the terms of the Vedas in a very nasty way, dirty way and things that mean different things. They interpret differently. And from there frustrated people of different communities pick up those words and attack Hindu religion. This is a very unfair thing. If you have to really discuss religion, you have to discuss it purely from the basis of spirituality.

Now in this tree of knowledge of good and evil there was a serpent, he was a wily, cunning serpent and he taught Eve to eat the fruit. So she ate and Adam and Eve they both ate from the tree of knowledge. God understood, God came to know, and expelled them from heaven, Because they have sinned. This idea of original sin which we have discussed in many of our talks is an extremely fascinating concept. I had heard of original sin long ago. Naturally I did not much understand what original sin was. But when I started working on this book World of religions, then I had to read, go deep and very deep into it. And then suddenly it struck me, Oh my God it is this. The expression is the tree of knowledge. And it is of Good and Evil. You know what is Good and what is evil. So what was before that? Now supposing Adam and Eve had not eaten from this tree of knowledge, what would have been their status? Beyond good and evil. What is beyond good and evil? Advaita. This is something where every religion flops though they are talking about it. This is the sad part.

Adam and Eve were with God. and they did not know what is good and what is evil. They

did not know what is true and what is untrue. They did not know what is good and what is bad. They did not know what is death and what is life. This is Advaita. They were in a state of Advaita although presented here mythologically. Those of you who are interested in understanding the Puranas, if Thakur wills, someday we will take Bhavat Puran to see how spiritual ideas of Hindus have been presented as myth. Myth is not anything wrong, nowadays by myth they mean lies. It is not so. These are the stories, expressions of ideas that cannot be properly expressed through words and are expressed through certain stories. Special class of stories.

So now we have good and bad. It is a tree of knowledge. In Hindu religion or in any society knowledge is considered to be the King. We are all striving to attain knowledge. Why should it be something bad? The goal of life is to attain knowledge. Adam and Eve, they ate from the Tree of Knowledge. It is just an expression. They actually ate from the tree of knowledge of duality. From the non-dual state they now knew the state of duality. And this in Vedanta is known as Ajnana.

What is Ajnana, what is Avidya, what is Maya ? Those of you who have been into Vedanta, those who have been listening to pop talks, you might have heard expressions like Maya, Avidya etc. What is Maya, what is Avidya? Knowledge of duality. The moment you have duality, that means you know what is good from the bad, truth from the untruth, you are in the dual state. What is this dual state? This is evil, this is maya, this is ajnana, The goal of every spirituality is to get out of this Ajnana. The goal of every Abrahamic religion is to go back to that state. when they were with God. Now when they come up with expression ideas like heaven where you have 72 huris etc, well that is a different thing and we are not going into that. We are going into core spirituality, what it means going back to God. So we had a divine fall, it is fall from grace. Going back to that state. How do you go back to that state? According to Vedanta, by getting rid of ajnana. So who we are. We are sinners. Sin of what? Original sin. Why original sin? Because when creation took place, automatically duality was born. And God said , I am quoting Upanishad, “Eko-Ham Bahu-Syam, Praja-Eyam” , I am one I will become many. Multiplicity is there. Duality has entered. But in the Bible, multiplicity has already come. However remember this is a myth and myth must be taken as myth. Because myths are supposed to convey something very deep very high. This is a state of non-duality. So how to convey it? By saying that although there is multiplicity they do not know of that multiplicity. The moment they ate they were now conscious and Eve blushed, as she was is now conscious of the female state. Being a mythological story we must not go on questioning this and that. We need to understand what is the idea that is being conveyed. And this idea is compatible with Vedanta, because Vedanta is ultimately the master of spirituality. Whatever other religions may say, Vedanta is the master of spirituality. Because it does not depend on any sacred book, word of any master, no one, nothing. It is pure

principles particularly as we shall see in Mandukya Karika. Realisation matters. But realisation is your own affair. Your realisation is not going to help me. However that realisation can be presented as logically as possible. And that is what Mandukya Karika, and not only Mandukya Karika, every Upanishad, every scripture all over the world does.

For example, those of you who have some idea about Buddhism would know that instead of talking about Dualism they are talking about Dukkha Nivritti. Sarvam Dukkham - everything is pain. What is pain? Multiplicity is pain. When you study Buddhism what is the core idea? The general public is like monkeys. They find something exciting and start aping. It is difficult for a common man to live on a plane of higher ideas. So let us not get into these popular talks of this monk and that monk. I am talking of core Buddhism. What does Buddha want? Nirvana. What is Nirvana? Dukkha Nivritti. What is Dukkha Nivritti? Cessation of pain. That is end of multiplicity. So Buddha is seeing multiplicity as pain. Hinduism is seeing multiplicity as Ajnana. And how Abrahamic religion is seeing Multiplicity as sin? Whether you call sin, whether ajnana, ignorance or pain they are all one and the same. The goal of every religion is to go beyond, this pain beyond this ignorance beyond this sin. Actually they want to go beyond multiplicity. Because beyond multiplicity lies that state where God alone exists, nothing else exists. Beyond multiplicity is that pure state of consciousness, where even if Adam and Eve were there and they are one.

Swami Vivekananda, brought Vedanta to the practical level and said do not discriminate, there should not be any kind of discrimination. This very same idea is going back to heaven where there is no discrimination. Mind it. In heaven there will always be discrimination but what the Bible is describing is not the typical Heaven but it is the mythological heaven where there is no multiplicity. And that is why Adam and Eve cannot differentiate between each other.

When Rahul, son of Buddha was born, he said here comes the bondage named Rahul. He is talking of bondage. The son is bondage. Avidya ignorance is bondage.. What is bondage? Ignorance. What is ignorance? It is sin. What is the original sin? Original sin is not that Adam and Eve ate apple. Original sin is getting multiplicity affected. However, as I said Hindus have a culture of spirituality which no other religion has. This of course I can say very boldly. You may have scholarship, you may have books, you may have great churches, big churches and you may have guns, you may have gold, but spiritual culture belongs to India. That is our privilege. To understand spirituality you have to know Vedanta, you have to know Hinduism. So you need to get out of this original sin, you need to get out of this ignorance. Christianity says we are all sinners, born sinners. Why? Because we are born in ignorance. Not sin the way we understand. And this is where they make the mistake. And that is what Hindus will not do. Jesus does not want to say born sinners in the sense we understand. No he doesn't. It is the creation of the church, and remember what Marx said, religion is the

opiate of the society. When you try to mislead people, when you try to put bondage you are putting heavy pressure on them. Jesus was the prophet of the Kingdom of Heaven. Why should he bring ideas like evil and ideas like sin? However when Jesus came, finally came the light of spirituality, because if you read the history of the Jews, with all my due respect to Jews, as far as core spirituality is concerned, it lacks in Judaism. It is more of a ritualistic religion and to interpret what their sacred text contains they had Pharisees and Sadducees who would explain those words. Jesus came and he gave spirituality. Even when I was pretty young, when I was dabbling in these books, I was just kind of exploring a bit. I instantly understood that the relationship between the old testament and the New testament is the same as Karmakanda of Vedas and the Upanishads. Those of you who might have studied the Upanishads, deeply, can connect so easily with the Bible. But to connect with the old testament the Vedas are not enough. You need to have Puranas. Swamiji also says that they are Pauranic. The Vedas are a little higher. So when Jesus came he brought the freshness of spirituality in his land, the Land of the Jews. And he had such beautiful expressions that later the Christians started saying that Jesus is the saviour. Jesus gave his life to take away our sin. Sin of what? Don't you think that it is illogical to believe that there was Eve who ate an apple and that sin is on the entire humanity? That is ridiculous; preposterous. If you talk of ignorance covering all of us, that makes sense of course.
“Come ye heavily laden” says Jesus. Laden with what? Burden of this existence. Is it something unusual? Not at all. Because every prophet talks like that. Compare it with Lord Krishna who thousands of years ago, before Jesus says, sarva-dharmān parityajya mām ekaṁ śharaṇaṁ vraja. Oh Arjun, give up all dharma, idea is dharma means good and bad, give that up and take shelter in me, ahaṁ tvāṁ sarva-pāpebhyo mokṣhayiṣhyāmi mā śhuchaḥ - I will cleanse you of all the sins. This one verse in Gita explains the complete relationship between original sin, Jesus the saviour and Vedanta. What does Sri Krishna say.? Give up all good and bad. Duality is good and bad. Dharma means both good and bad. Dharma is not good alone.To be with God, to be spiritual means to go beyond good and bad. This is what Lord Krishna says to Arjun, once you leave all good and bad, I will cleanse you of all good and bad
As Jesus is the saviour, Jesus is also cleansing humanity, provided you take shelter, not in Jesus the Christ but Jesus the son of God, Jesus the God. Only when you have taken shelter in God, that means you give up everything. Giving up everything means giving up this idea of duality. Only when you have given up the idea of duality, that you become one with God and you move towards non-duality. Those of you might have read the biography of Sri Ramakrishna, you will see that Sri Ramakrishna was crying for mother Kali and then he gave up everything. He absolutely had nothing. He lost every sense of belonging with and to everything in this world. This very thing has been beautifully codified in Yog Sutras. You may

check our playlist and listen to the Raja Yog talks.
So, this idea of original sin and that we are all born sinners is something that Hindus don't agree with. Of course we are a different religion but more importantly, according to the Hindus, not everyone is born in ignorance. For example every time an incarnation, avatar comes, he is divine. Lord Krishna says “my birth my deeds are divine”. Lord Krishna, Sri Ramakrishna is not born sinners. Sri Ramakrishna repeatedly says whenever incarnation comes, there comes people, some of his companions who are ever free. They have all the knowledge. So they are not born sinners. So, not everyone born is a sinner, according to Hinduism. By born sinner, I mean those who are under ignorance.
So this is a brief introduction to the relationship between religions. How the idea of original sin, fall from grace in Judaism, was made into a very big issue by Christians. And Islam says it was a mistake but there also you need to go back to a divine state through prayers to Allah. What is the meaning of praying to Allah? The same thing. You need to give up all your attachment, all your association with the world and be with God. This is all that the various religions are saying.
When Lord Buddha is talking about Sashtangamarg, Ashtanga Upay, it is the same thing. You need to get rid of all your associations because association means multiplicity. Multiplicity means ignorance. Ignorance means Sin. So when people talk about original sin, we don't understand. This is the unfortunate part. Because the problem with Abrahamic religions is that they have an extremely closed mind. I will tell you a very interesting episode. Swami Vivekanada came across one french book and he wrote in his own handwriting, much later the book was found. We will find it mentioned in Swami Vivekanands’s new discoveries in the west, and I have mentioned that in my book, “The World of Religions”. Swamiji met a French traveller and he said that a Hindu can never be converted. You just can't convert. He once saw in the banks of Ganga at Varanasi, sacred place, and there a Christian father was standing on a chair and making a vitriolic attack on Hinduism. And the Hindus were sitting calmly and listening to him. Just imagine somebody talking against Christianity in The Vatican, what will happen. Think of somebody talking against Islam at Mecca in front of the Kaba, imagine what can happen. Hindus don't even bother. They don't. Every now and then someone would raise their hand and ask a question to clarify a particular point told by the padri. He said imagine the confidence that these people have in their religion that they don't mind when you come attacking them because they know your attacks are foolish. Not only that, they ask you questions. Swamiji loved this thing and noted it down and sent it to a friend of his in America with a letter. I also laugh and quote this story. Hindus are open minded. Because we have a spiritual culture. But folks from other religions somehow are terrified and because their minds are not open. I really feel, if they had really opened their mind, it would be disastrous for them because Vedanta will sweep. Because

Vedanta is not the word of God as the Quran and the Bible are believed to be. Vedanta is not even the wisdom of God. It is truth, just truth. Anyone can explore it. You don't have to believe in any prophet, you don't have to believe in any sacred book . Here is the truth. Practise it. And you know the truth, while you are alive, in this life only. You need not die and go to the garden of Eden and find that tree of knowledge. Nothing like that. The Upanishads, unlike other sacred books even of the hIndus, do not focus on any prophet. Upanishads do not go for any saviour. Upanishad do not go for Sri Krishna as saviour or Sri Ram as saviour.or Shiva as saviour, Upanishad say well ignorance is yours, bondage is yours and you alone have to get out of it. When I lock the figures of both the hands together, this bondage is not an external bondage. It is a self imposed bondage. Only I can remove it. No one else can. So that's in short the relationship of Vedanta with other religions. More or less major religions are covered. Jainism and Sikhism are not so important in this context as they don't have something extremely new to offer.

Coming back to our Upanishad, Mandukya Karika, which is here struggling to make all efforts to remove our ignorance, to remove our original sin. Sin is going beyond the command of God. God had commanded, but Adam and Eve violated that command, sin of that violation is still on us. If we have to present this idea that in the beginning there was only knowledge, there was something that was beyond 1 and 2 and 0, and from there the idea of multiplicity came. How do we present it? Well as Upanishad says, “Eko-Ham Bahu-Syam, Praja-Eyam”, I am one I wish to be many.

Coming back to our Upanishad, it says that the mind has three states, Visva, Taijasa and Prajna. Something that we have been discussing repeatedly. And we also in the previous chapter mentioned some of the ideas where there is lack of comprehension, mis-comprehension, then in deep sleep there is non-cognition. And we were continuously discussing how Turiya was there which is considered to be the fourth state but actually it is not a state. This is the reality like ocean on which we have the three waves, three waves of waking, dream and sleep. Karika 10 says, Nivritte sarvaduhkhanam Ishanam Prabhurabyah - Once you get established in Turiya, it erases all your pain, all your miseries. We do get mails once in a while, I have committed this mistake, I have committed that mistake, I wish you commit more mistakes. Nothing like that. Nothing like making mistakes because mistakes make you great. As you make mistakes, you realise these mistakes should not be committed, you are out of it. It is only through making mistakes that you grow. The goody goody ones never grow in life. It is the mischievous who grow in life. Note it. You won't believe me, you may even find my words dangerous. But that is the fact. So, we had Nivritte sarvaduhkhanam....if you want to get rid of Dukkha as Buddha says, Ajnana as Vedanta says, Sin as Abrahamic religions say, if you are emotional types, devotional types, then you have to take help of Jesus, you have to take help of Sri Krishna, You have to take help of Sri

Ramakrishna, but if you are brave type, brave, spiritually brave, you don't need any saviour. It is your Dukkha, your ignorance and your Sin and only you have to get rid of this and in this life only.

Now we are not talking of some of those religions who keep on talking about like we have these Brahmas. They will talk about the formless, well formless had a feet, and formless even has a name, how can formless have a name? It is formless and it has a name. And you can worship it and you can pray to it. Delusional religion, delusional belief. That is the only expression that can be used about it. And we have burning examples. India is the land where you have these delusional beliefs coming up every now and then. Now the latest is Secularism and liberalism. I wish these people had studied something.

Now we move to Karika 11.

We need to remember two things. Firstly, Turiya removes all misery. When it comes to removing misery, Turiya is the King. Secondly, the mind is bound by cause and effect. Consciousness is beyond mind as there is no cause and effect.

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कार्यकारणबद्धौ ताविष्येते विश्वतैजसौ |

प्राज्ञः कारणबद्धस्तु द्वौ तौ तुर्ये न सिध्यतः|| (Karika 11)

Visva and Taijasa are conditioned by cause and effect. But Prajna is conditioned by cause alone. These two (cause and effect) do not exist in Turiya

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Visva and Taijasa are conditioned by cause and effect. And Prajna is conditioned only by cause. There is no effect in it because there is complete non-cognition. Had there been some kind of cognition then you could have talked. So sleep is non-cognition so it is pure cause.

Effect is in the form of result as we understand. Cause is the reason behind the whole thing. That is like fuel. The reason is seed. So if you think of seed and the tree, tree is the effect seed is the cause. In the case of Visva and Taijasa, we have non-apprehension and mis-apprehension. So you are not able to know the truth correctly.

So there are three states and there is the fourth Turiya which is not really a state. Which is reality. So we have Visva and Taijasa. What is the characteristic of Visva and Taijas? It is

कार्यकारणबद्धौ - Kariya Karan baddhou, Badhhou means under the bondage, under the restriction of within the boundaries. Basically it means “characterised by”. You might have heard the expression, Science, and we even have a monk, who says Science is my religion. Being scientific, what is science? What is science? Recently someone told me on a youtube comment, there was a discussion of five elements and how Akash, Vayu, Agni, Jal and Prithwi. So Jal, Jaltatwa is born of fire. So he writes, you monks have absolutely no idea of Physics. He hasn't even listened to this. Anyway what is Science? If anyone asks you, is

religion scientific? What exactly do you mean to say? Science means a simple thing. Cause and effect. That is all.

Is spirituality scientific? The answer is no. Is religion scientific? I will discard any religion which is scientific. Because science is conditioned by, bound by cause and effect. Your waking state, your dream state, is bound by cause and effect. Even sleep does have a cause. And in Turiya, in Atman there can never be any cause and effect - this is what **द्वौ तौ तुर्ये न सिध्यतः** - dvou tou Turiye na siddhatah says. Cause and effect limits the waking state, limits the dream state. That means characteristics of the waking state and dream state are cause and effect. In sleep you don't have cause and effect, and in Turiya out of the question, there is no cause and no effect, it is beyond everything. Is religion scientific? Religion can never be scientific. Any religion which is scientific, any philosophy which is scientific, is a false religion. Is a false philosophy. Because religion and philosophy have to be beyond cause and effect, it has to be intuitive. It should not be speculative. People confuse reality with being speculative. Religion is not speculative. Religion is realisation. Religion is the truth. Religion is not bound by cause and effect. God is not bound by cause and effect. Forget God, forget religion, forget spirituality, forget Atman, even your sleep not bound by cause and effect. Dream yes, waking state yes, imagine when your ancestors thousand of years ago discussed these rational things! When today's youngsters come and ask, is religion scientific? Do scientists believe in religion? No true scientist who believes cause and effect as the ultimate can ever believe in religion. Because if he believes in religion, he is playing false. He has to be false. If somebody says, science is my religion, that is science is everything for me, science is ultimate truth, he cannot be religious. Because Science is bound by cause and effect and religion is not. But who will listen? I am an ordinary monk who is trying to explain these and I don't even get views. Very few listen to my talks. And these things can never ever be popular in any way. Do remember that your sleep is not affected by cause and effect, even your sleep is not scientific and you are talking of religion being scientific! You are talking about Atmajnan being scientific! How deluded you are, how ignorant you are!

Religion, Self knowledge, God are ever rational. They are inspirational, they are intuitive, They are not speculative. Mind it. So, Shankara says, he explains that the cause is when something is in the form of seed and when it bears fruits, It is known as Kariya, that is the effect. Effect is the result, cause is the seed. So, in Visva and Taijasa, you find two very interesting things. The expressions used by Sahankaracharya are so beautiful and majestic. He says Agrahan and Anyatha grahan.. Those of you who know little Sanskrit will be able to appreciate these words.

Agrahan is when you cannot perceive something, when you cannot grasp something that is non-apprehension. Anyatha grahan is when you grasp something you are grasping something wrongly that is Anyatha Grahan. Apprehension here is not in the meaning of fear but in the meaning of not being able to grasp. When you are not able to grasp, it is Agrahan. When you grasp wrongly, when you get a thing completely wrong, it is Anyatha Grahan.
Now when we were talking of cause and effect, you have agrahan, non perception of reality, reality is Atman, reality is God, you are not able to grasp it. There is a seed, what is the poison tree that it produces ? the waking state. Whose great fruit is science. Rationality. What is that? Anyatha Grahana, wrong perception. According to this entire science is wrong perception.
So is science wrong perception? It is not. Within its limits it is perfectly alright. But from the standpoint of Atman, it is of no use.
When we are in Anyatha Grahan, ie. mis-apprehension, try to be as logical as possible. That is what makes science. But if you think that by being rational, you will know God, you are a big fool.
Seed is non-comprehension and it results in the waking state is mis-comprehension. You may get it completely wrong. God who is pure consciousness is now manifesting as say this pen. This pen is reality is pure consciousness. And yet I see it as a pen. In my dream I will see it as something different. I will see that my pen is turned into a snake or a tiger. And in deep sleep, neither will there be the snake nor this pen, worse, nor will there be pure Atman. This is the state of reality and you talk about being rational , talk of being scientific?
This Agrahan, non-comprehension is the characteristic of Sleep. And mis-comprehension is in the dream state and waking state. And again in waking and dream state, as far as comprehension of truth is concerned, it lacks. So you find anyatha grahan and agrahan common. However as far as deep sleep or sleep state is concerned, you don't have Anyatha Grahan. You have only Agrahan. That is there is no comprehension. But in Turiya, pure state of consciousness, neither there is non-cognition, nor there is false perception. You are established in truth. This is like the garden of Eden, Adam and Eve, where there was nothing good, nothing evil, there is no non-cognition, no false perception, none. You are established in truth.
So Atman has neither cause, nor effect. It is beyond cause and effect. Because it is beyond the mind. Beyond Good and Evil.

13. Mind and Beyond

We have already discussed Karika 11. It may be good to remember that the verses of the Vedas and Upanishad are called Mantras as they have a very special place. Karika means explanations. Verses of the Mandukya Karika may therefore be called Sloka or Karika. Karika means explanation.

Before we begin with Karika no 12, let us note that one name for Vedanta, which includes Upanishad, is Sampradyay Vidya. Sampradayay Vidya has come to us through traditions and we don't have such expression in any religion except Islam, where we have Sufi. in Sufi they talk about Silsila, that is tradition. But sampradayay vidya and silsila are quite different. This is not an issue . The issue is to understand what Sampradayay Vidya is . For that, it is important to understand how Hindu religion actually works.

Hindu religion does not convert anyone. So, Hindu masters did not go and tried to convert someone. Instead the disciple went to renowned teachers to know about certain things. We have such descriptions in the Upanishads too. However with time it became a tradition where families from Brahmin, Ksatriya and Vaishya sent their children to the Masters, who were themselves sages for learning. It was the tradition that children and people interested in learning went to an Ashram. When they chose the Ashram they chose a Sampradayay. This was a very important tradition, and Ashrams were often known as family tradition. It was also known as Gotra.

We are not very sure if people from the Sudra caste went or not. We really do not know. Because non-mention does not prove anything. There might have been cases. However, as far as we know, a very interesting thing that many of you might have missed out is that the greatest teacher of Hindu religion Vyas was born of a Sudra mother and the whole of Kauravas and Pandavas were born of Sudra grandmother. Actually this caste differentiation was not there in the vedic ages, the way it is today. Later because of politics and all, the matters of caste became extremely crystalised.

To know more about Hindu tradition you may listen to our series of short talks on the topic, in the Indian Spiritual Heritage channel, under the playlist “Hinduism fundamentals”.

Now this Gotra plays a very important role. It is a family tradition. So generally these kids were sent to the teachers who belonged to their family tradition. And sometimes they went to other teachers too, just to learn. Thus partly through family tradition, partly through teacher disciple relationship, the Vedanta tradition was maintained. And Acharya Shankar while commenting on Vedanta repeatedly asserts Sampradayay Vidya. Isopanisad, says “iti śuśruma dhīrāṇāṁ”, meaning, we heard this from our masters. And that tradition continues even today. I heard it from my teachers, my teachers had heard from their teachers. And this tradition goes back to Shankaracharya. And that tradition again goes back to Gaudapada. Just think dear readers, just think that you belong to that tradition where, when you are listening to one of these Vedantic teachers, I definitely belong to that sampradayay. And you

too right now, when you are listening, you belong to the sampradayay of Shankaracharya, in the sampradayay of Gaudapada who wrote this Karika. And through that you belong to the tradition of the sages who came up with the wisdom of the Upanishads.
Now, being a disciple, students could not question.There was no way you could question. Because, the knowledge that was coming from the teacher was thoroughly distilled. If you listen to our talks on fundamentals of Hinduism, you will see under normal conditions, the knowledge you acquire is through senses and mind. But the knowledge of spirituality comes from a purified mind where there is no trace of selfishness. Absolutely no trace of selfishness. Scriptural learning is also meditation. Imagine you don't have any selfishness, just imagine your own situation and you are well versed in scriptures.and you are extremely contemplative and meditative.
So, whatever comes in your mind that will be in consonance with these scriptures. Because you are meditating, thoughts will come from deep and you don't have any kind of selfishness. Because you have studied scriptures your mind will not go astray. It will not be something like a rabble of insane. Many times you come across religious teachers where you will not know whether the words coming out from them are true spirituality or just thinking of some wild imaginations. I personally had some encounters when I met some of these teachers and often I charged them that they are not telling the right things. So initially they used to take offence, but then once they were told from the scriptures, and what the scriptures say, and what the scriptures mean, generally they made sure that they never interact with me once again.
So, when they come up with these fanciful ideas, the reasons could be that their minds are not pure, not unselfish and may be with ulterior motives to become a Guru, Secondly they might not have studied scriptures in a Sampradaya. And thirdly they are not meditative. If even one of these qualities are absent, your work will not be reliable.
That is the authenticity of Upanishads. Upanishads are the words of the great sages where these three qualities existed. No selfishness and that is why they did not even charge their disciples, thoroughly established in the knowledge of the scriptures and meditative. These words were passed on from generation to generation, maybe hundreds, maybe thousands of generations.
Sometimes, these words needed explanation. And that is how Gauda Pada and Shankaracharya felt that since the explanation was written in verse form, it requires some more explanation. So we have three layers here. One is the statements from the Upanishads which cannot be questioned under normal conditions. Why ? because if you want to question that, you need to have the right qualification and the right qualifications are all of these; unselfishness, being well versed in scriptures and contemplativeness.

If you go to a scientist and challenge him he will not respond to you. You don't have the qualifications to talk to him. First go and study if you want to discuss evolution, They will say first have some knowledge about evolution. First go study and have some university degree and then I will talk to you.

Now Gauda Pada in his Karika did and Sahakracharya explained was a logical conclusion to that. Because Upanishadic statements are always explained. You don't try to establish them because they are already established.

That Upanishadic statement cannot be questioned. Statements of the Vedas cannot be questioned. Because these are the words of the masters who were unselfish, learned and meditative. This is ultimate and you can't be more than that. And it has stood the test of time and it is not that you pick up a book, study and say I have studied the Upanishads. You cannot study Upanishads like that. Upanishads must be studied under a teacher, because it is sampradayay vidya. Just to clarify, what we are doing here is Karika no 11, 12, 13,14 we are just explanations of the truth. When in the 7th mantra it was said Atman is Nantaprjnam, Na bahisprajnam which is Turiya. So these Karikas are just explaining them. I am sorry if I had to go in detail because these are some of the very basic things that are to be understood very well. In the previous talk we mentioned how in Visva and Taijas i,e waking and dream, although we perceive things, we do not perceive the truth. We don't perceive Tatva, that is the grand unified thing, the ultimate oneness. We see Multiplicity.

Multiplicity is Maya, Multiplicity is in the mind, they are like looking at an object with fractured glasses. Your glasses are broken, your lens is broken,may be broken into hundreds and thousands of pieces. Now looking at an object, you will be getting broken picture. My mind is like that. Fragmented lens. When you do Sadhana, when you study scriptures, when you practise meditation, the fragmentations slowly dissolve and mind becomes an unified lens once again. And that is when you perceive unity. It is not that unity is something and multiplicity is something else. Not at all. It is the perception of unity through mind that makes one appear as many. So it says in the waking state and in the dream state you do not perceive the reality. And because you do not perceive the reality it is non-apprehension or non-comprehension. You are not able to get it. Because you are not getting the truth there will be mis-apprehension. The example they use is when in semi darkness you see a rope you are not able to see the rope. Because you are not able to see the rope that means you are not seeing the truth. What will you see? Your imagination. And what is your imagination? Imagination is seeing an object with a fragmented lens, mind. So instead of rope you see whatever is in your mind at that time, you may see it as a snake, a water line , you may see it as a garland or anything else. If you are expecting something, suppose you are in need of a stick, you might think it is a stick. Because the fundamental feelings that are there in our mind, we see the world accordingly. But what about Turiya? Because in prajna, the sleep

state, the dreamless state, nothing else is left. And you are saying that Atman is also unification. So, are deep sleep and Turiya the same? Ultimately there is unification. These are the kinds of arguments that many say that God is energy or different kinds of presentations. Because you apply your mind and let your mind go as far as it can go. Then you come up with conclusions. But mind it, when you are going around with your mind, you are still moving around with the fragmented lens and so the knowledge you get will be fragmented.

You cannot rely on your mind for spiritual knowledge. When it comes to spiritual knowledge you will have to depend on someone who has experienced the truth. However questions may always come. Question is raised as to what is the relationship between Turiya and Prajna. Is Samadhi something like deep sleep? Because in deep sleep also you don't perceive multiplicity. That brings us to Karka 12.

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नऽऽत्मानं न परांश्चैव न सत्यं नापि चानृतम्।

प्राज्ञः किञ्चन संवेति तुर्यं तत्सर्वदृक्षदा ॥ (Karika 12)

Prajna does not know anything of the self or the non-self, nor truth or untruth. But Turiya is ever existent and ever all seeing

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The difference between dream, sleep and Turiya, that is Atman is being stated now. In Prajna, that is when you are in deep sleep, it neither knows self nor does it knows non-self. Here I am talking, I know I am talking to you, my words are going through this microphone, so here I am, here it is and there you are. Within Prajna neither you know self, nor non-self, nor do you know the truth nor the untruth. Neither you see the rope nor you see the snake, However **तुर्यं तत्सर्वदृक्षदा -** Turiyam tat sarvadriksada - beautiful words, Tat Sarbadrik - Turiya Atman is all the time all knowing. There is never a moment when it does not know, because it is pure consciousness. However Prajna is characterised by absence of knowledge. Absence of knowledge of everything. Neither does it know truth nor does it know untruth, neither it knows itself nor does it know the world, non-self. So you can never say that samadhi and sleep are same or even similar.No they are not similar. A stupid person going into deep sleep, comes out as stupid as he was. But a stupid going into samadhi returns a wise person. He has seen unity and he could get out of multiplicity and so is a wise person. Explaining this Acharya Shakar says that Atman is all knowing, all comprehending but prajna, that is during sleep, it does not know anything of multiplicity but during waking state, during dream state we are conscious of multiplicity. We know it is me, we know this is the world. In Prajna it is not there. So, you find that there are two kinds of bondage, two kinds of restrictions. One is absence of knowledge another is knowledge of something else. Non-

comprehension and mis-comprehension. In case of deep sleep, both of these are gone and we have non-cognition. We discussed it earlier. So if you can keep these three words in mind, non-comprehension, and because of that mis-comprehension and during deep sleep.non-cognition The expression is Tatva Agrahan, because you do not know the truth and you see something wrong . However, Atman is Sarvadrik, which is explained by Acharya Shankar very interesting as Atman alone has become everything and is also the knower of everything, because it is of the nature of pure consciousness. So, there is Sarvadrik & there is Sarvajna. Actually in Upanishads, many words come up for the comprehending power of the Atman, which is pure consciousness. Sarvjna is one, and Sarvadrik another word, that which can see everything. It knows everything, It can also see everything, that is comprehend everything but without getting identified with it . That is why you find that this problem of non-cognition, non-comprehension and mis-apprehension are all out. Because it is always comprehending, comprehending fully. How do we know that? We have to depend on the teachers because teachers have said that. Of course every religion talks like that. The example they use is not to prove something but to explain. If you go to the Sun, you will find that it is always lit up, there is always light, no possibility of any darkness. Just like that , in Atman there is never any darkness. Darkness of ignorance, non-cognition, non-comprehension, mis-comprehension are not present in any way. So, what about the dream state? What about the waking state? Atman is present here too as a witness. Atman is present everywhere as a witness. It perceives the waking, it perceives the dream, it also perceives the sleep state, and that is when you come out of the sleep state, you say I slept so well, I had a wonderful sleep etc.. Because Atman is present there too, It keeps comprehending three states , but those three states belong to the mind. And they have these qualities.

Now on to Karika 13.

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द्वैतस्याग्रहणं तुल्यमुभयोः प्राज्ञतुर्ययोः।
बीजनिद्रायुतः प्राज्ञः सा च तुर्ये न विद्यते ॥ (Karika 13)

The non-cognition of duality is common to both Prajna and Turiya. (But) Prajna is associated with sleep in the form of cause and this (sleep) does not exist in Turiya

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The idea is explained further that this non-cognition of duality as we mentioned just now, that is not seeing multiplicity, is there both in Prajna and Turiya. But Prajna that is sleep is associated with sleep in the form of cause, and this does not exist in Turiya. Here we need to explain two three terms. Nidra, which is sleep, is used in two different senses. One is the normal sleep that we have. It also means the characteristic of sleep, which means non-comprehension. Because in sleep you do not comprehend anything. Similarly Swapna,

dream it means the normal dream that we have. And it also means the characteristic of dream which is mis-comprehension. Similarly the waking also can mean the waking and also mean the absence of the knowledge of truth. Here it says that, it is true that multiplicity is absent in sleep. No doubt. However, it has the seed of sleep (**बीजनिद्रा).** Here the seed means ignorance. It is not able to perceive anything. The term used is Bijanidra, translated roughly it becomes seed of sleep. Actually, it means ignorance. This lack of ability to perceive. However, Turiya is beyond all these. Because Turiya is comprehending everything, all the time. It has become everything. We had mentioned how the first stage is waking, second is dream etc. but these are all stages of Atman. Atman is the witness and it keeps on watching. So it is all knowing. If it is all knowing, how can you say that it can ever be equated with sleep? Because in sleep, there is non-cognition. No it is Atman.

We need to understand that every religion has its own reasoning. Every religion. Islamic philosophers were pretty famous in their time and same with Christian philosophers. They were great. It is through them we can understand their respective scriptures. Similarly Vedanta has its own set of philosophers and teachers who explained the thing. To know something superficially for example if you ask me about Physics. I can say E=mc^2, and many know this. But really understanding what relativity is or what Physics really means, it requires learning at a deeper level. So we are studying at a deeper level and trying to understand how Turiya differs with sleep. This term Bijanidra was later used by the sages of Puran for God as in Yog-nidra. Sometimes you sleep but you are conscious of everything, That power only God has. Common man does not have. You might have seen that picture where Lord Vishnu is lying down on a snake in a huge ocean. He is in Yog-nidra. He is in sleep and yet He is comprehending everything. Only God can do it, not the common man. We can do it as Atman but then there will be no sleep. God has that special power. The idea is that God stays detached to the affairs of the world. Because God is there, everything is going on yet He is detached. So the expression **बीजनिद्रायुतः प्राज्ञः** - Bijanidrayutah prajna - Prajna is associated with Bijanidra, that is ignorance. This is a non-comprehension of reality. So basically Karika 12 and Karika 13 explain the difference between Turiya and Prajna. Turiya is Sarvadrik, all comprehending, Prajna has a seed of ignorance , because of which we have this dream state and the waking state.

Then comes our Karika no 14.

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स्वप्ननिद्रायुतावाद्यौ प्राज्ञस्त्वस्वप्ननिद्रया।
न निद्रां नैव च स्वप्नं तुर्ये पश्यन्ति निश्चिताः ॥ (Karika 14)

The first two, (Visva and Taijasa) are associated with the conditions of dream and sleep; Prajna is the condition of sleep without dream. Those who have known the truth see neither sleep nor dream in Turiya

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You need to note that this Upanishad is not using the expressions - Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupti. They are using Visva, Taijasa and Prajna. There must be something very special. Why should they bring new expressions to convey the same idea, because here when they use the expressions swapna and nidra they have special meaning. And that cannot be used if they use only Swapna and Nidra. That is why they use Visva, Taijas and Prajna. Taking this waking state as standard, where in the waking state you do not see the ultimate reality, and in dream you see distorted reality, reality of this world. So they use this world Swapna and Nidra, there is non-cognition. In Visva and Taijas you find that there is Swapna and Nidra. Non comprehension is there and mis-comprehension is there. Non-comprehension of the truth and mis-comprehension means it gets some false idea. However, in Prajna its only Nidra, perceives nothing. However in Turiya there is neither sleep nor dream. It says

निश्चिताः - Nischita - It means the wise, who have arrived at the truth. You can arrive at the truth, in two ways. One is if you go into Samadhi. Second is when you study scriptures, listen to the masters, go on contemplating over it again and again and again. And then you reach a firm conclusion. In these states of mind, Visva Taijas and Prajna, something that we discussed repeatedly is non-cognition, non-comprehension and mis-apprehension, are kind of mixed up. This is what Karika is explaining.

Now the wise person knows that in Turiya, where there is neither sleep nor dream, never gets deluded again. The simplest example that we can give is that if you look at a Map, say about a place, and if you read many books, even then the possibility is there that you may make a mistake. Suppose you want to go to the Himalayas, and you see the map. You read about the place in the books. You form a very good idea. But even then the possibility of making a mistake is very much there. Unless you have experienced it directly, once you go there, once you have seen it, all doubts about that place vanish forever. There is a very famous gentleman, who passed away recently, U. R. Ananthamurthy who was a wonderful writer and a great scholar. He used to write in Kannada but he himself was a scholar of English. So he has written very nice novels through which he tried to kind of show the plight of Indian society. One of his characters is a kind of anglophile. He is so enamoured by the British, and is trying to live like them but he has never been to England. And so he reads only English books and has a fairly good idea of London. And there is one gentleman who returned from London, who has stayed in London. He is invited and he keeps on asking questions on London, ok tell me about this street.Is it this? Because his idea is only through books. Once he sees it, everything gets clear.

How do you get established in Turiya? How do you know you are in Turiya? In other words how do you get self-Knowledge? For that we move to Karika 15

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अन्यथा गृहणतः स्वप्नो निद्रा तत्त्वमजानतः।

विपर्यसे तयोः क्षीणे तुरीयं पद्मश्नुते ॥ (Karika 15)

Svapna or dream is the wrong cognition of reality. Nidra or sleep is the state in which one does not know what reality is. When the erroneous knowledge in these two states disappears, Turiya is realised.

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Slowly he is taking us towards what Mantra 7 had said, Na antaprajnam, Na bhisprajnam. That is, when you are dreaming, which is wrong cognition, that is mis-apprehension, mis-cognition whatever word you may use. And sleep is non-cognition. Now when this erroneous knowledge of these two types gets destroyed, that is when you get established in Turiya, realise Turiya.

Just in passing, in Vedanta we have some stories, but we don't have many stories about realisation. Surprisingly, when Vedanta went to China and took the form of Tao, Tao is of course slightly different, they came up with wonderful stories about when the Tao was realised. Now, the realisation of Tao is not exactly the same as realising Turiya. But there is a great similarity. And they have come up with such wonderful stories about how one realises Tao, how one attains Tao. How do you attain it? How do I get established in self knowledge? How do you get established in Turiya? What exactly is my problem? We have lots of problems. We suffer from wants, we suffer from misery. Like Buddha said we suffer from misery, different followers of different religions have different kinds of problems. Some are scared to go to hell. Some are burdened by the problem of sin. In Hindu religion also you find hundreds of problems. Because of which people take to religion. Gita beautifully explains it c"hatur-vidhā bhajante māṁ janāḥ sukṛitino 'rjuna ārto jijñāsur arthārthī jñānī cha bharatarṣhabha" - four kinds people come to me - arta, one who is in distress, jijnasu - the curious, the seekers, artharthi - one who wants money and wealth and jnani - those who know self. Note that the fear element is not there. Hindu religion does not have this fear element. The fear of going to hell is not there. Distress is there, but not fear.

Here in Mandukya Karika they are not discussing all those things. They will not be talking about earth, distress, not be talking about curious ones, that is "seekers", not talking about who want wealth. Mandukya Karoka talks about simple things. Do you realise that you suffer from delusion? Delusion in the form of dreams and delusion in the form of non-comprehension. In the waking state, you suffer from multiplicity. In the dream state you suffer from distortion of this multiplicity. I sleep, you suffer from non-cognition. Do you realise this? Simple things. This is the majesty of Mandukya Upanishad. Instead of going through

this process and that process, they have come with an entirely new thing. Do you realise that you see multiplicity and you feel that there has to be some kind of common thread?
When Swami Vivekananda was talking about Hindu religion in America, even in his inaugural message he was saying that the aim of science is to reach that unity. Once you reach that unity, the purpose of science is served. Those of you who have some knowledge about Physics would know that this is what Physics has been doing since ages. They have been trying to unify and unify and unify. But that is what Darwin also did. When you go by the creationist theory, that God created man, God created women, God created plants and snakes, this is multiplicity. Darwin brought the whole thing on one single platform. Evolution means ultimately you go back to one single cause. The only difference between Darwin and Hindu religion is that for him it is all from a unicellular form of life while in Hinduism it is all from pure consciousness.
We never try to worry about this idea of evolution, because that is not our area. This belongs to the area of biologists and they will work on it. But we also believe that ultimately everything is unified. That is what Darwin did. Creation is like the blooming of a plant, everything is in the seed and everything blooms. And creationist theory is like painting by a painter, if has to paint a tree, if he wishes ,he can first paint the flower, then he can go to the stem. But in creation, it is not like that. There first will be the stem, then branches, leaves and then flowers. In creationist theory you can create in whatever order but in Darwin's theory of evolution, it will not be like that. There first comes man then comes the monkeys , then comes the viruses etc. Set pattern. This is what is unification. This is what Mandukya is saying.
Your problem is in seeing the multiplicity. So actually you are not seeing unity. There is non-comprehension, worse, you are seeing multiplicity. So yours is mis-comprehension too.
When do these two stop?They don't stop one by one. They stop simultaneously. The moment multiplicity stops, that very moment unity appears.It is not that one follows the other, but simultaneous. When the light is switched on, the darkness does not go slowly. Switching on of the light and vanishing of the darkness are one and the same. Vanishing of multiplicity and knowledge of unity are one and the same thing.
When this non-comprehension of reality stops, and mis-comprehension of reality in the form of multiplicity stops, Advaita comes. So what exactly do we need for self knowledge? Stop seeing multiplicity as much as we can. The ultimate multiplicity goes away only in Nirvikalpa samadhi, just lower than that is when you get identified with a personal God, whatever be the religion. Every religion actually has only personal God. Most of them don't even realise that. In personal God you have comprehension of me and thou, you. In Advaita, there is no more I or you. This just goes away. When multiplicity vanishes, knowledge of unity automatically comes. It is not

one after another, mind it. So, in this Karika, अन्यथा गृहणतः स्वप्नो निद्रा तत्त्वमजानतः - Anyatha grihnatah swapno nidra tatvamjanatah - Nidra means not knowing. Swapna means knowing wrongly. When these two go away, knowledge of reality automatically comes. This is where Vedanta differs from Buddhism. According to Buddhism, when this happens, there is Nirvana. Actually Lord Buddha did not explain what Nirvana is. But the general conception is Shunyavad and Ksanikavigyanvad. So everything is zero in Buddhism at this stage. It is zero because you cannot explain what it is.

In Vedanta ultimate ultimate truth remains. How does it happen? On to Karika 16

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अनादिमायया सुप्तो यदा जीवः प्रबुध्यते।

अजमनिद्रमस्वप्नमद्वैतं बुध्यते तदा ॥ (Karika 16)

When the Jiva or the individual soul sleeping (i.e., not knowing the reality) under the influence of the beginningless Maya, is awakened, it then realises (in itself) the non-duality , beginningless and dreamless.

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Gaudapada was a great poet it seems. He explains that Atman as Ajam, Anidram, Aswapnam, Advaitam - That which was never born, where there is never non-cognition, where there is never Miscomprehension, and Advaitam. This state that lies beyond mind,rather the state that appears as three states of mind, is the unborn, it will always be there, Anidram - it never falls into ignorance, Aswapanam - Never sees wrong things, never has mis-comprehension, that is the state of unity. That is once you have Samadhi, once you perceive the Advaita, you will never again have these problems. But when does it happen? How does it happen? अनादिमायया सुप्तो यदा जीवः प्रबुध्यत - Anadi mayay supto yada Jiva prabudhata - we are in sleep state, that means non-cognition, remember the technical term here. Now from the normal sleep. It has become a technical term sleep , nidra, which means non-cognition. We have forgotten who we are. That story of Original sin, beautifully explains who we were and what we are. We had the divine fall. We were with God, we want to go back to that state, where you will be one with God. When did it happen? Anadimaya - Anadi, no one knows when it began because time was born when it all began. Before that, time did not exist. Because time is ultimately the count of events.

When the Jiva, that is individual us, asleep under the beginningless Maya is awakened, we are actually sleeping and we don't know our true nature. The Jiva did not realise that it is birthless and it never had ignorance, it never had mis-comprehension, it is unity. Unity is the truth. When the fragmented lens that is mind, it becomes unified, now you see the object absolutely correctly. What do you see? When there are no two. No multiplicity. Does it mean there was one? No Advaita doesn't mean one. Advaita means non-dual. There is no duality.

Does it mean one? No. Because if you say one, you become monotheistic,like Christians and Muslims. It is beyond one and two. Is it zero? Then you become Buddhist. If two, you become a gross dualist like Samkhya and Yog philosophers, where Purusha and Prakriti are two realities. eternally present. It is a very interesting thing. According to Yog there are two realities, Purusha and Prakriti. According to Christianity, Islam and Judaism, there is one reality, God alone. In Buddhism reality is zero because nothing remains. In Advaita, it is neither two, nor one nor zero. You can only say that it is non-dual. Many people do not really succeed in understanding this. Advaita is not one. Advaita means beyond zero, one or two. Of course in popular Christianity the reality is three, God the father, God the son and God the holy ghost. But that is as far as I understand is about the world so it can even go up to three.

Acharya Shankara, his language was extremely poetic. He says very beautifully This sansari Jiva is transmigrating soul. It fails to comprehend truth, the reality and that is why because of Maya, it goes into that state where it is in non-comprehension, mis-comprehension. Because It identifies itself with parents, with family, with friends, with property. And feels happy, feels sad. When there is union feels happy and when there is separation feels sad. But when the right teacher of Vedanta, teaches that look you are Atman, you are pure, then he wakes up from this. I got this from the exact translation of whatever Acharya has said, a very beautiful thing -" One who is called the Jiva, the individual soul, (whose characteristic is to be) subject to the law of transmigration, sleeping under the influence of of Maya which is active from time without beginning and which has the double characteristic of non-apprehending (on account of being of the nature of the cause) and mis-apprehending Reality, experiences such dreams as 'This is my father, this is my son, this is my grandson, this is my property and these are my animals, I am their master, I am happy, I am miserable, I have suffered loss on account of this, I have gained on this account"

What are we? transmigrating soul, sleeping under the influence of Maya, which is active from time without beginning. Creation means the beginning of time. So we have been deluded since the beginning-less time.

If you study the Bible, you will find that creation took place in 4004 BC. We don't believe in such statements. We believe in beginningless.

We experience such things as this is my father, this is my son, this is my grandson, this is my property and these are my animals and I am their master. I am happy, I am miserable, I have suffered loss on account of this, I have gained on this account. Just think we are continuously into this. I know I am Samarpanananda, I know I am a monk. I know I am teaching, Only I and I and I . This is all because of Maya. When the Jiva remains asleep, experiencing these dreams. So what are we actually doing? We are actually experiencing dreams i.e., mis-comprehension. Dream mean mis-comprehension. When the Jiva is asleep

in the two states, he is awakened by the gracious teacher. The teacher has to be gracious and he has himself realised the Reality as indicated in Vedanta “Thou art not this, of the nature of cause and effect but That thou art” . We are continuously thinking of cause and effect, which we discussed earlier and will discuss later too. We are continuously bound by mind, cause and effect. But the Guru teaches Tatvamasi - you are that, then there is no cause, no effect. Going beyond mind means, going beyond cause and effect. When the Jiva is thus awakened from sleep, he then realises his true nature. What is this nature? It is birthless. Birth means cause and effect. So it is birthless, and because it has none of these characteristics like birth, growth etc. So neither it has birth, nor there is any change in Atman. And it is anidram because there is no nidra in it. It is never in non-cognition, non-comprehension etc. So it is said then alone that you realise Atman.

So in simple words, when you are identified with this world, stupid things of this world, multiplicity of this world, the compassionate Guru comes to help. And tells you that look, you are not so and so. Those who have read Tiya, in Tiya exactly that happens. Hans, the teacher comes and says, look you are much more than what you think you are. And you can achieve much more than what you are getting now. You are bound by cause and effect. The teacher comes and says, look, you are not this. Go beyond. Here comes what we wanted to say in Karika 17

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प्रपञ्चो यदि विद्येत् निवर्तेत् न संशयः।

मयामात्रमिदं द्वैतमद्वैतं परमार्थतः ॥ (karika 17)

If the perceived manifold were real then certainly it would disappear.This duality (that is cognized) is mere illusion (Maya). Non-duality is (alone) the Supreme Reality

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Assuming some day I will have samadhi, assuming I will realise the non-dual nature of existence, questions come, but why worry right now? Gaura Pada says if this multiplicity had been a reality then this question would have made sense. But this multiplicity is imagined. It is the working of your mind and that is why you need to practise Advaita at all times. You need to know that you are trapped in a falsity, you are not actually trapped. You are trapped into falsity and you need to break free of it. So the example of seeing a snake in the rope. This knowledge, what you are seeing as the world, what you are seeing as multiplicity, is actually just imagination. So, try to practise it. Try to think of it all the time.

Actually this idea has damaged India and Hindus greatly. Because even when I was growing up, as a village boy, I had heard this “sansar maya hai, sabkuch moha hai. Sab kuchh mithya hai”. That is too much. As a consequence we Indians became lazy. We became Tamasik. Swami Vivekanada wanted to change it. Because you really want to realise that this is Maya, this is Moha, you need to have strength. Without strength you cannot realise it. Somehow there is a fundamental conflict, strength is maya but to break free of Maya, you

need to have strength. Like a rocket going into space,a satellite going into space. You need a rocket, where the rocket must fall away.

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विकल्पो विनिवर्तेत कल्पितो यदि केनचित्।

उपदेशादयं वादो ज्ञाते द्वैतं न विद्यते ॥ (Karika 18)

If anyone has ever imagined the manifold ideas (such for instance, as the teacher , the taught and the scripture), they might disappear. This explanation is for the purpose of teaching . Duality (implied in explanation) ceases to exist when the Highest Truth is known

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The great difference between teacher and disciple also stays only till you are in Dvaita. Only till you have not realised Atman. When Atman is realised, there is no teacher, there is no disciple. It all becomes one. This is the power of Advaita, that it can remove the difference between Guru and disciple.

There is a beautiful story. Sukadeva the great sage, son of Vyas, went to learn Advaita from King Janak. King Janak says, first you offer me your Guru Dakshina. Because once you have realised Advaita, there will be no difference between the teacher and disciple. So there will be no question of Guru Dakshina.

14. Misconception regarding Advaita Vedanta

Before we take up our discussions further on Mandukya Karika it is important that we clear some of the common misconceptions that many have regarding Advaita Vedanta.When I was a young Brahmachari in white dress, I also had many strange ideas about Advaita Vedanta. So such misconceptions are common.

Nowadays suddenly Advaita Vedanta is gaining popularity because of some of these popular speakers.

After Swami Vivekanada, we had Sri Ramana Maharshi and later many others have tried to present Advaita Vedanta in various forms. But Advaita Vedanta is a very deep subject and it is difficult to understand and so not easy to grasp. It is more difficult and complicated than say Rocket science.

Here we shall discuss the most common misconceptions. We shall not be going into technicalities and philosophical aspects of Advaita Vedanta. We shall discuss the common misconceptions.

The aim of Advaita Vedanta or the truth about Advaita Vedanta is to de-hypnotise the mind, which is hypnotised with the belief that duality exists.

Here is my pen and here is the microphone. I know that I am different from this pen, I know this pen is different from the microphone. Now is this difference a real difference? Is it a permanent difference? I always give a simple answer; look, if the difference had been real one, if the difference had been truth, reality, why write philosophy? Why go into deeper introspection that ultimately leads to spiritual realisation. Unless there is more to reality than meets the eyes. Because duality meets the eyes. Definitely that is not the ultimate truth. Now once you realise what is Advaita Vedanta, once you realise the spiritual truth, duality vanishes, hankering after the worldly object finishes forever. And thus misery and sorrow also go away. Now through this by presenting the truth in a particular way, as we are progressing with Mandukya Karika, the ideas will become more clear as we proceed and some of you must have already got a better understanding of philosophy by now.

Advait Vedanta actually removes lots of misconceptions about religion. We are not going to name any religion. We have a brief encounter with some of those conceptions and we find it very funny. So Advaita Vedanta is the ultimate philosophy that removes confusion in different religions and philosophical systems.

In all good systems over the years misconceptions creep in. Advaita Vedanta is no exception and a lot of misconceptions creeped into Advaita Vedanta as well. The Western world is partly responsible for this. Nowadays Yog is an in thing. But Yog has been in India for thousands of years. So much so that Prince Siddhartha, on his way to become Buddha used to practise Yog and subjected himself to great amounts of austerities. But Yog was never popular in India.

And suddenly somehow Yog went to the Western world and Yog got transformed into Yoga. There is nothing called Yoga. But Yog has become Yoga and I find even our monks are telling Yoga. There is no word called Yoga. But when a thing gets transformed, some trappings have to be added. So they added one more ‘a' to Yog. and Yog became Yoga, Krishna became Krishnaa (by pronunciation - कृष्ण being pronounced as कृष्णा). Krishnaa (कृष्णा) means Draupadi, and people don't even realise that! Hare Rama Hare Krishnaa - they are trying to rhyme it without realising that it is कृष्ण it is not कृष्णा .

So, Yog went to the west and came back packaged as Yoga. And everybody is practising Yoga. Forgetting what Yog stands for. Those of you who have listened to our talks on Raja Yog, would know that Raja Yog is not only much more but it is qualitatively different from what passes on as Yoga. And now this modern day Gurus, millennial Gurus, are making Yoga more popular.

Swami Vivekananda spread words of Advaita Vedanta, rather Vedanta in the west and now it is returning to India in a different form. Naturally it is bringing certain packages with it,

creating mass of confusions.There are some popular speakers in India, speaking on Advaita Vedanta, and it is pathetic.

Now First thing is that Advaita Vedanta relies heavily on self enquiry. Those of you who have been listening to our talks on Mandukya Karika or if you have listened to our Isavasyopanishad talks or Kathopanishad, you will see self analysis in different forms. Now when you think of self analysis you right away think of psychological self analysis. Where you have psychiatry, Psychology and Psychoanalysis.

But Advaita Vedanta is not about that. Advaita Vedanta lays a lot of stress on self analysis but this self analysis is about analysing between the real and unreal, not about your inner self analysis. So, when we think of self analysis under normal conditions we think of mind. But self analysis in Advaita Vedanta means going beyond mind. So this mind and beyond mind, are something very important. When you think of self analysis, normally it means analysing your mind. But Vichar, the term in Vichar, in Vedanta the term is Vichar which in English, we translate as self analysis. By self we mean capital self with a capital S, Atman. Knowing what is Atman and what is Anatman. That which is pure consciousness and that which is not. So there is a fundamental difference. So because of this, nowadays Advaita Vedanta has got mixed up with Western Psychology. Freudian, Jungian philosophy and from there lots of popular things are applied.

Recently I was delivering a talk to students of IIM-Trichy and I said something entirely different. One young student got up and told me, “you spoke so beautifully of Advaita”. I was shocked. Not a single thing that I discussed was from Advaita. Simply because Advaita is a popular word and the lady used that word. So it was then that I decided that I must have a talk on this. No it is not about self analysis.

Advaita is also not only about applying in daily life. This also we shall discuss. So it is not about psychological happiness, It is not about psychological well being. It is not about psychological success. In no way. Advaita Vedanta is not about all these. If you apply Advaita Vedanta in daily life, these things may come as a by-product. But that is not the aim or goal of Advaita Vedanta. And not at all and in no way.

Advaita Vedanta is about negating our psychology, forget about psychology. It negates the mind. And here you think that it is about uplifting your personality, It is about motivational things. No it is not. Of course you can apply because there is nothing in this world that cannot be applied beyond its own set comfort zone. Our safe zone.

Take for example Hindu religion or Christianity or Islam. Their ideas can be applied to other things too. There are scientists who have applied Hegel’s philosophy in their work. Very few people understand Einstein’s theory of relativity and what relativity is. But relativity has been applied in every field. Even in morality it has been used. And we say morality is relative. Everything has become relative. So, we human beings have not yet given up some of the

characteristics of our Darwinian ancestors. We continue to behave like apes and we ape things.

You come up with a brilliant idea, people lap it up and they start talking about that idea in areas which have nothing to do with the original thing. Advaita Vedanta has nothing to do with the psychological things, well being and happiness and self improvement etc. Then people will say, why should I practise Advaita Vedanta? Well, then it is not meant for you! If some teachers are utilising it to give you a pep talk it does not mean that truth should be dragged down.

So, if you understand a bit of your psychology, if you understand a bit of your mind, it helps in your spiritual journey. But spirituality is not all about your human psychology. Well that is a general idea about self enquiry in Advaita Vedanta.

Now from there we take up sections. The first is the path to understand Advaita Vedanta. Nowadays people have started thinking, particularly after Shri Ramana Maharshi, who was a great saint. You don't come across such saints so easily. Maybe in some centuries. He kept on talking about “Who am I”. And suddenly “Who am I “ became popular. And everybody started talking “Who am I”. And from there suddenly this misconception has entered that Advaita Vedanta is all about only “Who am I”. It is not so. Vedanta is about focussing on God as reality.

We have different schools of Vedanta. Vishishta Advaita, Advaita, Shuddha Advait, Achintya Vedaved and so on. But all these schools of Vedanta focus only on what they preach. Sri Ramanuja had influence all over the country and had many encounters with some of these great saints of these sampradayas and they are great scholars. However they do not accept Dvait, they do not accept Achintya Vedaved, they do not accept other schools of Vedanta. On the other hand, Advaita Vedanta, particularly by Acharya Shankar, accepts every school. You will see that Gita discusses various paths to realisation. Now when Acharya Shankar, writes a commentary on that, he takes all these paths to be valid, till you accept that Atman alone exists, Atman is Brahma and everything else is secondary. So for him, every other school finds a place. Not many people understand this, not many people realise this.

The problem was when Sri Ramanuja came on the scene, he was not happy with Advaita Vedanta. So he came up with his own school of thought and it became very popular. Now to counter Ramanuja and later counter Madhwacharya, other schools also came up with Dualistic schools of thought. We had a great monk, Swami Tapasyanandaji Maharaj who was the vice president of Ramakrishna Mission. He had written a wonderful book - “Bhakti schools of Vedanta”. So instead of calling them Dvaita. Vishishta Advaita, he called them Bhakti schools of Vedanta. The problem is that Bhakti schools of Vedanta do not accept Jnan school of Vedanta where focus is on self enquiry. But Advaita Vedanta takes everything. It takes Jnana Vedanta Bhakti Vedanta, Vijnan Vedanta, every Vedanta. And this

Advaita is not a path. Advaita is a complete whole. People often make this mistake. This mistake comes partly because these scholars, saints, who followed Advaita Vedanta post Shankar, they had to counter these masters like Ramanuja and Madhwacharya, so they went on chiselling their arguments and they kind of moved away from the main thing. Even Swami Vivekananda wanted that scriptures need to be interpreted afresh, because the interpretations of different schools present just one sided view of the scripture. The scriptures are a complete whole, scripture present Advaita Vedanta and Advaita Vedanta here means Dvaita, Vishishta Advaita everything taken together. This is not my interpretation. That is actually Shankara's Advaita Vedant and that is what Shree Ramakrishna taught. That is what Swami Vivekananda taught, that is what Vyas taught. The truth is that Advaita is not against worship, not against Puja, Advaita is not against rituals. Advaita takes everything. Those who are familiar with Hindu traditions would know that when Acharya Shankar wrote his famous commentaries on Gita, Upanishads and Brahmasutra, established four monasteries in the four corners of the country. And Everywhere there is one Adhisthatri Devi, the Goddess, the chief Goddess. If it is only self enquiry the way Sri Ramana Maharshi preached or the way it is popularly understood, Acharya Shankar would not have done that. Advaita Vedanta presents a complete picture.

Similarly when it comes to Maya, it is the main pillar in Advaita Vedanta. But when you say that Brahman alone exists, Atman alone exists, why is this duality Maya? What is Maya? Now, post Shankar philosophers, what they did was instead of focussing on truth, which is Brahman, pure consciousness, they started explaining Maya. Advaita is about Brahmavad, Brahman alone is the reality. The individual is one with the universal. That is Atman is equal to Brahman, However the philosophers came down to explaining Maya, and one name for Advaita Vedanta in derision is Mayavad.

It is not Mayavad. Advaita Vedanta is about Brahmavad. Brahman alone exists.

Now this Maya is not an illusion. Normally those who are familiar with Indian languages, know that Maya, Moha is often equated with illusion. Maya is not illusion. Maya is just a statement of fact. I love someone, I get cheated repeatedly by that person. Yet I don't stop loving that person. A mom loves her son and the son becomes brute. The son tortures his mother, but the mother cannot stop loving her son. This is Maya. There are thousands of things, the nature of things is one way, you even understand that nature is this way, but you cannot control it. You cannot behave according to that. Emotions are involved and those emotions, even if you know what is the truth, you cannot behave accordingly. This is Maya. So Maya is a statement of fact. Maya is something you experience all the time. Sri Ramanuja came up with seven famous objections concerning Maya. He was a great sage, a great mind, and a great scholar and who are we to comment on him. But the fact is that I don't know why he had to attack. Because, Maya is just a statement of fact. Acharya

Shankar doesn't say anything beyond that. So Maya cannot be explained. It can only be experienced.The origin of Maya is from Atman. Atman is beyond mind. The questions like why, how, where do not come. This is such basic understanding. And Maya exists till mind exists. So you cannot say when it will end, how it will end. No you cannot.

Now God is a very important aspect of Advaita Vedanta. You may find that the concept of God in different civilisations has been different. But once I was doing some work on Pythagoras. And there I had come across some very interesting facts. Like how mathematicians see God. So we know Christianity looks at God, how Christianity expresses God, how Islam expresses God, how Vedanta looks at God and how different philosophers look at God. Pythagoras was a believer in whole numbers as God. And it was a big shock to him, when he realised that there can be negative numbers. There can be fractions. There can be zero. He believed that God is a whole number. And Pythagoras was such a great mathematician he firmly believed that God is a whole number. And there was Plato. He believed in Geometry and he said God ever geometrises. To him God was somebody who was into Geometry.Then there was Carl Gustav Jacobi the famous mathematician. He believed that God is about Arithmetics. Then there was James Jean, he was a famous scientist, mathematician cum Physicist. He said the great architect of the universe, that is God, is a mathematician. Then we have other philosophers, we have Kant, we have Hegel, and starting from the time of Plato, we have mentioned so many philosophers. Then we have ideas about God from different religions. We have Buddhism and Jainism who do not believe in God. In Indian Philosophy, in Samkhya there is no God. In Mimansa which is the most powerful philosophy of India next only to Vedanta now, but earlier Mimansa was superior to Vedanta. They don't believe in any God. Yog also does not believe in any creator God. Yog believes in God but not as a creator God. And Buddhists believe in Shunya, Complete effacement. So there cannot be any God.

Now those who have some idea about Advaita Vedanta, people often think that God is an illusion in Advait Vedanta. I remember an instant which was very painful for me to hear. There was an immature monk, at Haridwar, not of Ramakrishna Mission, but outside, and there was another monk living there who was a great Sri Rama devotee. And this Advaita Vedanti monk, he went and convinced that God is Maya. Everything is Maya in post Shankar Vedanta. I don't know how that monk said that. Because Acharya Shankar has so beautifully commented on the aspect of personal God in tenth chapter.eleventh chapter and twelfth chapter etc. So this monk who belonged to the Sri Rama tradition was shocked.He said do you mean to say that what I have been worshipping till now is an illusion? That monk said yes. He gave up. When I heard this story, I was very upset. See this is what happens. Many think that God is an illusion in Advaita Vedanta. No God is not an illusion. Advaita Vedanta accepts impersonal God as also personal God. Maybe in one of the next talks we will

discuss what exactly is meant. Nor is Vedanta pantheist, that everything is God. No, we don't believe in that. Some Western Philosophers try to explain that way. But that is not correct.

One thing that we explained earlier is that Advaita means non-duality. Non-duality does not mean zero, non-duality does not mean one. Duality means intervention of mind. When we began our talk, we talked about duality. Duality always means intervention of the mind. If there is no intervention of mind, what is there? How do we know what is there? When you say that God is formless, you are saying on the basis of intervention of the mind. Your mind is intervening to say that God is formless. Those who fought religious wars of course in India, we Hindus never had any religious war. Now they are talking about God being formless, God being with form, God having this quality, God having that quality without understanding that God is beyond mind. And what you are discussing, even if you are discussing formless, whatever be your religion, be it Advaita Vedanta, be it whatever it is, there is an intervention of mind.

There is a simple logic. Logic is not extreme, any subtle or fine. It is a very simple thing. We mentioned that once Sri Ramakrishna was teaching Narendranath about Advaita Vedanta, and he said, there are ten pots reflecting the sun and asked Narendranath how many suns are there? Narendranath answered “Eleven suns”. No go on breaking the pots,till one remains. And asked how many pots are there? Narendranath answered “Two - one here and one above”. That pot also breaks, so Narendranath like us would say one sun remains. Sri Ramakrishna said No. There is no one to say what is there. Exactly this is what Lord Buddha said, Nirvana or Shunya. Mind is not there. You cannot say what is there.

So, God in Advaita Vedanta is neither zero as the popular belief of say Buddhists nor it is one reality like Islam or Christianity or any other Dualistic schools of Hindu philosophy, nor it two as we have Shiva and Shakti, Purush and Prakriti. So reality in Advaita Vedanta, God in Advaita Vedanta is neither zero, nor one or two. Nor is it more. And as my good friend Sean says God is all of those things and none of those things. God is one, God is two, God is beyond all these. God is number, God is whole number, God is also fraction, because till mind is there, mind perceives God variously. When there is no mind, you cannot say what is the nature of God. Mind perceives God. That is the term. But when the mind perceives God that cannot be the real nature of God. Just not possible because you are looking at a picture or something with your lens that can never be the real picture. So to say that God is formless, to say that God has a form, to say that God has this form, that form is all coming out through your mind. That is why Sri Ramakrishna repeatedly said God is formless, God is with form, God is many more things. That is exactly the correct

expression and description of God. This is Advaita Vedanta. And this is where Advaita Vedanta differs from every other school of thought, completely and forever. Those of you might have read my book "The World of Religions", it is about eight major religions of the world, you will find that when it comes to Abrahamic Religions Judaism, Christianity, Islam you can replace one God with the other with slight adjustment here and there, you won't find any difference. So God knows what they are fighting for and what they are fighting against. We have no idea. Some tweaks here and some tweaks there and they become replaceable. Advaita Vedanta cannot be replaced by any. Not even by Buddhism, under no condition. Because real Advaita Vedanta will say that, God is "A" (অ) where A means "No, or Not", ie A-dvaita, not Dualism.

So, Advaita Vedanta will never say that God is one. Advaita Vedanta will never say like that. Advaita Vedanta will never say your God and my God are same because the idea of God in this world depends entirely on my mind. And since there are so many different minds, your God will always be different from my God, even if our Ishta is the same. For example, I belong to the Ramakrishna Mission. My Ishta is Sri Ramakrishna. Thousands of monks of devotees, whose Ishta is Sri Ramakrishna. But my perception of Sri Ramakrishna will be slightly different from any other follower of Sri Ramakrishna. It has to be. The spiritual reality will always be different. Same with Sri Krishna. Millions and millions devotees of Sri Krishna here in this country, their perception of Sri Krishna will be different.

We do not have the concept of infidels. They say if you don't believe in this you are an infidel. And you are fit for hell. In no way Advait will say this, because ultimately your conception about God is born of mind. It is a very simple argument. I always feel surprised how people don't understand this. Because actually you see what happens unless you have been into practising religion, unless you have been trying to feel spirituality, you cannot understand these finer things. You need to have some touch of spirituality, some experience of spirituality. Otherwise you cannot grasp these things. And that is why so much of killing and so much of intolerance.

When it comes to the soul, Atman, the key word in Advaita Vedanta, is often translated as soul. Even Swami Vivekananda used the word soul because the western audience wouldn't have understood. A soul has a different idea. When we say the word soul the most interesting concept nowadays is Junganian (after psychologist cum philosopher Carl Gustav Jung. He was a modern man in search of soul), When he talks about soul, he talks about a functional complex of psyche. So there is the sense of I, me, mine. There is this mind, there is this ego complex, psyche in total, so a certain functional complex and from there you find

that today's scientists working on consciousness, talking about soul, they are actually more into this Junganian soul. Atman is not that.

There is a book by Kazuo Ishiguro called "Never let me go". It is a beautiful book about clones and there also soul is being described as having sensitivity. If you have sensitivity, if you have cognition, you have a soul. So Jung knew Vedanta well, yet his own concept of soul came from the Christian belief in soul, where soul is practically equated with cognition and sensitivity. Every time you read Western science studying consciousness, they are talking about sensitivity, plus the power of cognizance. That is cognitive ability, coupled with sensitivity. And then we have this idea of Christian soul, something shining within, conscious principle within, that is created by God and it leaves the body after death and waits till there is that judgement. And this concept is there in Islam and Zoroastrianism etc.

In Advaita Vedanta none of these things are there. Atman loosely translated as soul, has nothing to do with all these types of descriptions of soul that we have been discussing. Atman of Advaita Vedanta, Soul of Advaita Vedanta is infinite, nothing else exists beyond it. What we see. when we feel as "I" , it is not a reality but this is Avidya. There is a difference between Maya and Avidya. Maya is cosmic and Avidya is individual. So the popular concept of soul is about " I" being the real. In Advaita Vedanta "I" is born of Avidya, ignorance. See the complete divergence. Like East and West. Normally when you think of "I", in whatever system of thought, "I" becomes the reality, the "me", but when you think of "I" in Advaita Vedanta it is an illusion. Because this "I", the sense of "I", the subjectivity that we have, which is Avidya, actually is an illusion. "I" as me is an illusion. In philosophy, in psychology and in most religions , 'I" I is the reality. This is what differentiates Advaita Vedanta from every other system of thought. And because of this Advaita Vedanta differs from every system of thought in India too. Because of this transmigration of soul that is rebirth, Law of Karma, all these things become temporary. Because all these things belong to the mind. So the idea of reincarnation, idea of rebirth, and idea of law of Karma, all these things hold till you are in the bondage. Once you have Self-knowledge, once you know Advaita you will find that these things never existed. That is the worst part. Then you understand that it was never there. There was no transmigration. There was no reincarnation. There was no law of Karma. Then what was it? This is the problem. They call it Maya.

When you were within it, it was all true. When you are outside it, you find it was not there. When you travel by train and you get off, you see that train keeps on moving, the train moves on, and you move away. You don't say that I am now out of the law of Karma. It is not that, as if the law of Karma is operative and you have come out of its clutches. No. You realise that it was never there. Like darkness and light. When light is there, there is no darkness. When darkness is there, there is no light. Does it mean that I and you are the

same. No, it isn't. Advaita Vedanta will never say that I and you are the same. This is the kind of confusion we had when we were young. So I and you are not the same.
I picked up a beautiful sloka, it is from the book Tatvopadesh. It says, Bhaavaadvaitam sadaa kuryaat, kriyaadvaitam na karhichit – भावाद्वैत सदा कुर्यात् क्रियाद्वैतम् न कर्हिचित्. In real life try to practise Bhava Advaita. That is your attitude towards Advait should be within you. Do not go on practising it in the external world. Advaitam trishu lokeshu na-advaitam guruna saha – अद्वैतम् त्रिषु लोकेषु, नाद्वैतम् गुरुणा सह - You can practise Advaita in all these spheres of existence where you say that these things do not exist. But do not practise this with Guru.
However as we have seen in the previous chapter that even the difference between Guru and disciple vanishes when Atman is realised. In ultimate reality these are not true. scriptures are for giving you ideas only. In ultimate reality these are not true. What this sloka says or means to say do not go on practising Advaita here and there. Like now politicians in India when they get up to speak they say Bhaiyo aur Baheno - Brothers and Sisters and suddenly he remembers that his wife is sitting on the dias, and he turns around and says, Munni ki Mako chhor kar - that means except my wife. Now he cannot make his wife his sister. Just like that, Advaita cannot be practised here and there. It is about your attitude. It is not about practice under normal conditions, by an aspirant. A person like Sri Ramakrishna can do it. Persons like Shankracharya, Sukdev can do it. Not you and me. Not in daily life. But if you read Swami Vivekananda's practical Vedanta, he talks about this. Why? Now you need to uplift yourself. And under normal conditions, you feel bowed down. Bogged down by duality. When we talk about Advaita, when we talk about practical Advaita, it is to uplift yourself. Do not go telling that well, I and you are the same because Advaita is the reality. So your property is my property, is not true. His property is his property. What is true of God is true of the world too. We will be discussing a little more of this to understand why Advaita is talking about reality in a particular way and when it comes to practice, say something else. Then comes the world. We are discussing the Advaita standpoint. And when we are discussing the world, here comes the role of Mandukya Upanishad. We have been discussing the world. The waking, the dream and the dreamless. As we shall see, Vedant denies causality. This is a very important statement. If you are truly interested in Advaita Vedanta should keep it in mind that under normal conditions causality, the relationship between cause and effect as normally understood in science, and in science it is inviolable. Cause and effect are inviolable. Cause is always related to effect. And in Samkhya philosophy of thought, it is known as Satkariyavad. Cause and effect are related. - Parinamavada. But Cause and effect are not related in Advaita Vedanta.

Advaita Vedanta is about VivartaVada, which means it appears to be different, but this difference is imaginary and not a real difference. Cause and effect, Kariya Karan is not an inviolable thing according to Advaita Vedanta. Now because of this, what happens is that there is never a " becoming" in Advaita Vedanta. You don't become anything. It is only "being". This is an extremely important concept in Advaita Vedanta. When you practise devotion, you might have heard of a "good" Christican, expression - he is a good christian. When I was young, I used to get fascinated with such wonderful expressions. Can we have a good Hindu? You cannot become a good Hindu. Because you don't have to "become" a good Hindu. You ARE a good Hindu, you are practising certain things which are bad. When you want to be devoted, you say I want to be a devotee, You want to become something. This is where Advaita Vedanta needs to be understood. And one has to understand, those of who are serious students of Advaita Vedanta that Advaita Vedanta is not about well-being, it is not about becoming more happy, not about applying it in daily life. No it is not so. It is about being from the moment that you get up and from that time to when you go to sleep and when you dream, that means 24 hours a day 365 days a year. But you are continuously becoming this or becoming that. So Advaita Vedanta is not about becoming, but about being. And the world is not denied as a delusion.

There is a famous book called "Zen and the art of Motorcycle maintenance". I was a great fan of that book. So there the product ministry comes to India and here he listens to talk on Advaita Vedanta in a University by a professor and he asked what about the suffering. And this teacher says well it is all mithya. I was horrified. No Advaita Vedanta, if he is a true Advaita Vedanta will speak this crap. The world is not an illusion. The world is a form of truth. It is an aspect of truth. And because it is an aspect of truth, it comes with perks and packages. When you say that , the world is real for me, It will give you a certain amount of suffering, it will give you a certain amount of enjoyment. Are they illusion? No they are not. Advaita Vedanta never says that these are illusion. But they will say that Samsara means shok and moha, Samsara means sorrow, Samsara means expectation, delusion. It is all about delusion and sorrow. Do you want it? If you say yes, go ahead and enjoy the world. No problem. If you want to be an Advaita Vedantin, then of course you will not enjoy worldly pleasures. It is a complete package deal. As say Perks and packages. If you are a devotee, there will be perks and packages. If you are an Advaita Vedantin, you will have perks and packages. If you want to enjoy the world, there will be perks and packages. Only Advaita Vedanta lists that, if you hold on to the world, these are the things you will get. If you are into devotion these are the things that you will get. And if you are into Advaita, these are the things you will get. The choice is now yours. Suffering and enjoyment which is the real mark of physical existence, these are not illusions. They are just part of the package.

So, wherever you may be, it is a world of mind that comes before us and this world of mind has a reality because the supreme reality, Atman is behind it, the way you have light and you are looking at light with different lenses, or in different mirrors. You will see different reflections, you will see different light. And they are all true and at the same time they are not true.
So that was a brief discussion of misconceptions about Advaita Vedanta. We have not gone into technical and philosophical details as they are really not required.
So remember God is very much true in Advaita Vedanta, both in personal and impersonal aspects. Maya is a statement of fact. No one knows how it came into existence and no one will ever know that. And the World is very much real. And it is not about self analysis in the western way , nor is it only the “who am I “ approach. It is about knowing Atman and Anatman.

15. AUM is Atman

As we continue with Mandukya Upanishad, we have been trying to give you a fair idea about what Mandukya Upanishad is about. And what Advaita is because the main discussion here is on Advaita.
Before we begin, let me remind you that Advaita Vedanta is about seeing existence as a complete whole. Advaita Vedanta does not say that God is someone separate from us. Self that is bereft of any Upadhi, trappings, superimpositions, that alone is God. The problem is that, till there is mind, you cannot say that you are one with God. Because the moment there is mind, there will be some kind of superimposition. There is no way that you can get out of it. To give you an example, think of some great sage, let us say Jesus. Now Christianity treats Jesus as God. And normally they call him son of God. Jesus Himself says that I and my Father in Heaven are one. Yet when Jesus is a devotee, when Jesus calls God as father and that is He is the son, mind intervenes. The moment the mind intervenes, there is a separation. However in the case of Jesus it wont work because He is God. But as far as a devotee is concerned, however great he might be, let us not name them, however great that devotee be, he will always have that feeling that I am the devotee, He is the Lord. The moment you say I, the moment the idea of “I” enters, there is separation. Mind has come in. That is why Advaita is extremely difficult to comprehend. Go wherever you may, in your thought world, in your thinking process, “I” will always enter. And because the “I” will enter, Advaita cannot be practised. That is why, Advaita is meant for a chosen few and very few. Even Gita says so. It is not meant for all.However, we can definitely understand it theoretically.

You will always have a grasp of things, and that is why you will see that, in most ages, most saints, most preachers have talked about Bhakti. Since you cannot get rid of “I”, Since you cannot get rid of mind, you can see God as master and me a Servant. This is the reason why we have Dvaita , VishishtAdvaita etc.

Not that they are wrong, not that they are inferior, it is just about mind being there as an intervening medium. When there is an intervening medium, reality now appears as slightly different. Nothing wrong with it.

Now while seeing it as an complete whole, Advaita, when Mandukya Upanishad began and there was this first mantra, - ॐ इत्येतदक्शर्मिदं सर्वं तस्योपव्याख्यानं भूतं भवद्ः भविष्यदिति सर्वमोंकार एव। यच्चान्यत्ः त्रिकालातीतं तदप्योंकार एव॥ (Ref Talk 3).

AUM is the Akshara, it was explained AUM is Atman and then we discussed how AUM is the substratum of all the words, and Atman is the substratum of everything. If you really want to understand what Advaita Vedanta is, and for that matter, what spirituality is, you need to keep one fundamental fact in mind. Under normal conditions, name and object are two different things. Here I have this microphone, and when I say microphone and this actual microphone, these are two different things. But at the higher level, particularly at the level of mind, the mind cannot distinguish between the object and the word. And when you go further back, when you look at things from the standpoint of say creation, words, ideas and objects they are one and the same thing. That is why when God says “let there be light”, there was light. This is an extremely fundamental basic principle. This is something those who have been brought up in exclusive materialism, they will never understand. But that does not matter. Materialists do not care for spirituality, why should spiritual persons care for these materialists?

Here is a pen, now a philosopher comes in and says this is a pen. Should I really bother to study Philosophy just to know this is a pen? I will study Philosophy to know if it is more than that. Actually most philosophies are just like that. They just add a bit here and a bit there, more than that, and that is why they keep on contradicting each other.

But Nobody has succeeded contradicting Upanishads. Upanishads continue the way they were. Nobody has succeeded contradicting these spiritual philosophies of say the Bible of Gita. You just cannot. They don't describe the obvious. And yet they continue to be rational. At the high level of mind, words and objects are the same.

Word again has two aspects. The expressed and the non-expressed. So the non-expressed is the idea. So ideas and objects are one and the same. The expression used in the Upanishad is “name and the named (that is object) are the same”. So, it was said how AUM and Atman are the same. And then it was said that सोऽयमात्मा चतुष्पात् - soyam atma

chatushpat. If you might remember, Atman has four quarters. And then the four, Jagrat, Swapna, Susupti and these were discussed in detail.

So three things have been discussed. That was Mantra 1, where it was said that AUM is Atman, then Mantra 2, that says Atman has four quarters and then came Mantra 3, which described the four quarters of Atman. And now we have Mantra no 8.

It will now harmonise everything, whatever we are discussing. AUM is Atman, Atman has four quarters, description of the four quarters, and how internal and external are one and the same.From there we now enter the similarity between the constituents of AUM, and the quarters of Atman. Four quarters of Atman, you will remember that there is Vaishwanara, Viswa, Taijasa, Parjna. As far as individuals are concerned, we talk about Jagrat, Swapna, and Sushupti. Aum has similarity the way there is Vaishwanara or Viswa, Taijasa, Prajna, Just like that AUM has three letters, A, U M (अ, उ, म). Initially Atman was equated with AUM. from the standpoint of Atman and now the similarity is drawn from the standpoint of letters.

When brilliant people study Upanishad, they understand the truth the moment the teacher speaks.

The famous physicist Richard Feynman was once about to present one of his papers in a major conference where great scientists were present. Feynman was himself doubtful of one of the steps. But he thought he could probably pull through. As he started speaking and went through one or two steps, one of the scientists got up and said that you will get stuck up in two steps. This is even before Feynman came to that step, it was detected. They had never come across the proposition earlier, yet they could predict it. This is what a brilliant mind is.

Then there are ordinary minds. Adham buddhi as they say in Sanskrit. When you teach them something, they understand the opposite of what is being taught. So there are great minds and there are ordinary minds. Ordinary minds usually understand the opposite of what is being told. Particularly in spirituality and in Philosophy we have this problem.

In between the brilliant and ordinary minds are the mediocre minds. They need to be taught through many examples and similarities, arguments and presentations, and then they can grasp the subject.

I remember when I had come across this statement about brilliant minds, mediocre and ordinary minds, I had asked my teacher that no one has really seen a brilliant mind. My teacher was surprised and said why? Sri Ramakrishna told once and Swami Vivekananda could understand it instantly. There have been cases of great minds, Shankaracharya himself was a great mind.

Great mind means you say it once and your student catches it. Mediocre mind, you have to explain things differently. The ordinary mind will catch things opposite of what is being said.

Now what Mandukya Upanishad is doing is for the brilliant mind it would just say ॐ इत्येतदक्शर्मिदं - Aum Ityetad aksharamidam - and it is done. As they would say Aham Brahmasmi, Tavamasi. Finished. A brilliant mind would know what the teacher wants to say.

It is for the mediocre mind that they are talking about various aspects. For ordinary minds they know that the disciple will understand the opposite of what is being said and he will not even understand. With this idea we go ahead with the three letters of AUM, A U and M. Those who have seen AUM written as OM, that is not correct. Similarly in Bengali they write as ওঁ. That is also wrong. Because in the Upanishads, they very clearly say অ উ ম / অ উ ম / A U M. Now we move to Manta 8 of Mandukya Upanishad.

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सोऽयमात्माऽध्यक्षरमोंकारोऽधिमात्रं पादा मात्रा

मात्राश्च पादा अकार उकारो मकार इति ॥ (Mantra 8)

The same Atman (which has been described above as having four quarters) is again AUM from the point of view of the syllables (Aksharam). The AUM with parts is viewed from the standpoint of sounds (letters, Matrah). The quarters are the letters (parts) and the letters are the quarters. The letters here are A, U and M

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The English translation is very simple. That same Atman explained before as being endowed with four quarters is now seen from the standpoint of syllables of AUM.

So AUM is also divided into parts and Atman is divided into parts. Three parts and fourth is not really a part, Chatturiya. AUM also has three parts and a fourth that is silent. So it is being viewed from the standpoint of letters not from totality. The quarters of Atman, Visva, Taijasa, Prajna, Jagrat Swapna Sushupti , are the same as the letters A U M. Initially when we discussed this as AUM is everything, we had described how AUM is the metrics of all sound and how Atman is the substratum of all objects. Now come the Visva , Taijas, Prajna, and on the other hand the three letters.

And it beautifully says पादा मात्रा मात्राश्च पादा - pada matra matrascha pada. Matra means letters and and chatushpad it was said the quarters. The quarters are letters and letters are quarters. To remind you once again that actually this mantra is not needed. This mantra is needed essentially because we cannot grasp what is being taught in the Upanishad. So we need to be told variously, by this means , by that means.

The explanation is **sयमात्माऽध्यक्षरमोंकारोऽधिमात्रं** - so'yam ātmādhyakṣaram auṁkaro'dhimātram - Atman is adhyakshara. Adhyakshara is a technical term whose

meaning actually is equated to syllables. If you look up in the dictionary Adhyakshara means that which is equated to syllables. So Atman is Adhyakshara. Akshara is AUM. Akshara means letters and Akshara also means AUM. And AUM is adhimatra because it has three letters. Adhi means equals, sometimes it means sitting on top of it. So it means to say that this Atman when you look at it from the aspect of letters, adhyakshara it is Onkara (AUM). Initially it was explained from the totality and now as parts. And this Atman stays in adhimatra. It is Adhyakshara, it is also Adhimatra. Adhimatra again means the same thing that which stays making the letters as the base. That which sits on the letters. So Atman is equated with Aum, Aum as totality. Atman also sits on the individual letters as its quarters, because there is a similarity between quarters and letters as we shall see A/ अ is equated with Visva, U/उ is equated with Taijasa and M/म with Prajna. Just keep this in mind that Atman is being equated with the three letters of AUM. when you split, when you see Atman as split, when you see AUM as split, then their quarters and their letters, they have a similarity and they are one and the same. There is no difference.

Actually this whole idea is for ordinary minds to grasp. Acharya Shankar explains the same thing, Name and the Object initially when the comparison was made, comparison was between name and the object, AUM and the Atma. Now that very thing is being done in the split form so that one can understand. When something straddles Akshara, it is Adhyakshara and it sits on Matra, the letters it is known as Adhimatra. So Atman is Adhyakshara, Atman is Adhimatra. A matra is Pada, Pada is the matra. Quarters are the letters, letters are the quarters. Once you understand Mantra no 8, understanding 9,10 and 11 will not be very difficult. AUM basically is the name, it is essentially a name. It signifies something. And it was said that the past,the present and the future everything is indicated by AUM. Because Atman is Past, present and future. Anything that is beyond the conception of time, even that is represented by AUM. These were discussed in Mantra 1 and 2. The subject is subtle, and quite intricate, but not complex. But because we are not trained to think like that, there may be some difficulty in understanding this.

Now the similarity is being discussed.

अकार - Akar - A- is being equated with Visva.

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जागरितस्थानो वैश्वानरोऽकारः प्रथमा मात्राऽऽप्तेरादिमत्त्वाद् वाऽऽप्नोति ह वै सर्वान् कामानादिश्च भवति य एवं वेद ॥ Mantra 9॥

He who is Vaisvanara, having for its sphere of activity the waking state, is A, the first letter (of AUM) on account of its all-pervasiveness or on account of being the first (these being the common feature of both) . One who knows this attains to the fulfilment of all desires and becomes the first (of all)

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The sanskrit mantra is long, sounds complex. But actually it is very simple. Says Vaisvanara whose sphere of activity is the waking state, we have discussed this earlier, this is the first letter A, sanskrit अ. How do you say that A is the same as Vaisvanara? It is forcing something down your throat? It is not like a prophet gets up and says that what I say is correct. If you don't believe me you are going to hell. And you may go to hell after death, but before that your head will be chopped. No it is not like that. They will talk rationally.

The expression is मात्राऽऽप्तेरादिमत्त्वा-Matra apter adimat - adimat means that which is at the beginning. Or that which is the cause of everything. Acharya Shankar says that Adi is the first , the beginning. Vaisvanara that is Visva, it is Adimat. There are three states. Visva, Taijasa, Prajna. First is waking. All our knowledge comes in Visva. This was discussed earlier. Vaisvanara is the first. And अ , A is the first. Because of the similarity between being the first and secondly it says आदिमत्त्वाद् वाऽऽप्नोति - Adimatwadapnoti - apnoti in the sense of all-pervasive. A pervades everything. The alphabets as we know in Sanskrit every alphabet is pervaded by A. For example Ka/ क, Kha/ख ga / ग like that. What about I/ ई ? They say it is a different sound. A is the fundamental sound.,A being the fundamental sound, the alphabets in Sanskrit as organised by Panini, is much more scientific.

Actually English alphabets are a complete medley. It has taken certain things from here, certain things from there so you have A and then suddenly comes B. c, d. It is moving in e .Suddenly comes F. There is no scientific basis for A, B, C, D, E, F. When you look at Sanskrit, very rationally organised, you have Ka / क . Kha/ख , Ga/ ग, Gha /घ Ng /ङ . It is in consonance of movement tongue on the Pallet and going further back. It is systematically moving. Stress is moving and the point from where the sound is coming is moving. And they say that A/ अ, AA/ आ, e/इ , E/ई are four matras. You can add to any of these alphabets to make them sound. So as far as B is concerned, in Indian language it will be B will be ब+ि =बि. Because of all pervasiveness of computer and computer keyboard, we refined typing B in Hindi or any indian language to make it difficult. We will leave it two keystrokes. But because of the English keyboard, you need only one keystroke for B. That is a different thing. As far as phonetics is concerned, it is absolutely well organised as shown. Now when you look at this Varnamala, the alphabets in Sanskrit, everything is pervaded by A. Nothing can go out of A. A pervades everything. And Vaisvanara pervades everything as far as objects are concerned. Our states of existence are concerned. Whatever be our state of existence, we know only through Vaisvanara. Only in the waking state that we know everything. So the waking state pervades everything. The gross pervades everything. It is

the beginning of all enquiries. It is the beginning of all. So they say that there are two points of similarities. First is Adimat - the begining and the second is Vyapti - means all pervasiveness. A/ अ has all pervasiveness. Similarly Vaisvanara, Visva is the beginning and all pervasive. They are similar. So Jagariasthano - it is related to waking state. So there are three similarities. A equals Vaisvanara, equals waking. That waking and Vaisvanar are same has been discussed earlier. Now it is being said that A, is same as Vaisvanara, same as waking. जागरितस्थानो वैश्वानरोऽकारः प्रथमा - Jagaritasthano Vaisvanara Akarah prathama - this is the first letter there is a similarity. **मात्राऽऽप्तेरादिमत्त्वाद् वाऽऽप्नोति ह वै** - Matra apte adimatwad apnoti ha vai - and once you realise this truth . **सर्वान् कामानादिश्च भवति** - Sarvan Kaman adischa bhabati - person who has realised this truth, all his desires become first among the great. That means he gets whatever he wants. All his desires get fulfilled. Very interesting thing. So we have to realise three things Akar, A is same as waking state, it is the same as Visva. As far as your individual entity is concerned, your physical body is same as A, rather waking state is same as A. And as far as cosmic body is concerned, it is same as A. If you conquer A, you will master the waking state, you master the physical universe. All your desires from this universe will be fulfilled. This second part, the desire fulfilment, is the technical term for this in Vedic literature is Arthavad. Arthavad means eulogy, praise, in praise of knowledge. Under normal conditions people will want to know “why should I study? How do I gain”? Well if you can realise this truth that means you don't even have to master the whole of AUM. Because if you master the whole of AUM, you are the master of the universe. You become one with Atman. You become Aham Brahmasmi, you become Brahman. If you really want to enjoy the universe by becoming the master of it, you only need to master A. A is the first quarter. A is the waking state. So well the Upanishad say that of all the great persons you become the first. That means your desires will be fulfilled. So, just remember that they have two similarities. First is Adimat , the beginning and second Vyapti covering everything. So A is equal to Vaisvanara, A is equal to waking.

Then comes the second letter U / उ . U is very interesting. It says

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स्वप्नस्थानस्तैजस उकारो द्वितीया मात्रोत्कर्षात् उभयत्वाद्वोत्कर्षति ह वै ज्ञानसन्ततिं समानश्च भवति नास्याब्रह्मवित्कुले भवति य एवं वेद ॥ Mantra 10 ॥

Taijasa, whose sphere of activity is the dream state, is U (उ), the second letter (of Aum) on account of superiority or on account of being in between the two. He who knows this attains to a superior knowledge , is treated equally by all alike and finds no one in his line who is not a knower of Brahman.

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This is slightly complicated. The second quarter is known as Taijasa, which is the same as the dream state. So Taijasa and Dream are the same. Now it says that U/उ the second letter of AUM is the same as Taijasa, Dream State. So if you master the U, you master the subtle world.

Now how is U similar to Taijasa, the dream state? The translation is U is superior to A or intermediateness. So first let us see. Actually it is very difficult to say why U is superior to A. Reason being A being all pervasive nothing can be superior to it. But they say that there is a tree and there is fruit. Fruit comes later. Fruit is superior to the tree. When you want something, when you want to eat, you go for fruit not for the tree. So A is like a tree and U is like a fruit. So the U has advanced further. Similarly from the standpoint of waking and dream, dream comes later. From the standpoint of the universe Taijasa comes later. So Taijasa is further advancement, U is further advancement. Something like the tree and the flower, Tree and the fruit.

Another point is that U is intermediate between A and M. Similarly Taijasa is between Visva and Prajna. Both are in the middle. Because both are in the middle, they have a similarity. Now here we need to keep in mind that the similarity between AUM and Atman has been explained earlier. So we are not going into this. Here they just say that it was explained that AUM is Atman. Or Atman is AUM. Atman has four quarters, actually three. AUM also has three letters. Now they are equating letters with these three states. I hope that the idea is clear. U is in between, Taijasa is in between. U is further advancement from A. Taijasa is further advancement from Visva. And you might remember that it was mentioned that in the waking state we are mostly conscious of the objects. But in the dream state we go in the state of ideas. Ideas are superior to objects. And that is why the dream state is superior to the waking state. This was explained earlier. It might be difficult for you to remember all this. But then of course we are not discussing something ordinary. And anyone who realises this technical term is he who knows this attains superior knowledge. Knowledge becomes superior. You receive equal treatment from all. Your friends will praise you, enemies will praise you. That is what Acharya says. And in his family ignorant persons (ignorant of Brahman) are never born. Surprisingly in Upanishads once in a while we come across this expression that “Nasa Brahmavid kule bhabati”. In his family, in his lineage, no one is born who does not have the knowledge of Brahman. Which means that in the Upanishadic culture, this knowledge of Brahman was considered to be a supreme knowledge. Nowadays when people criticise Manu Smriti, people who criticise Hindu religion, they say Hindu religion is a divisive society, which is not. They forget this fundamental fact that in Hindu religion, spirituality is at its highest. Even Swami Vivekananda said, I don't consider a person Hindu unless he is spiritual. What is spirituality? Not the modern term where one says I am spiritual, I am not religious. Spiritual means one who has the knowledge of

Brahman, One who knew Brahman was known as Brahmavid. It is a blessing if you know U, you have mastered U, if you have known that U is the same as the dream state, if you have known that U is the same as Taijasa. Earlier it was shown that Taijasa and dream are the same because of the superiority of ideas. Now U is the intermediate. No one in your family will be born who will be ignorant of Brahman. That is a great honour for any sage. They are like today's everyone who wants his children and grandchildren to be educated. Educated for what? To make more money, to be successful. But in earlier times Brahmins wanted their children to be Brahmajnani. And they thought that was the best thing that could happen to anyone. I am a monk, and I have no one. Anyone who goes for success, anyone who goes for making money God speaks to him, may you go ahead. Nowadays that we have some viewership on Youtube, so many people come and try to contact me. They want to promote our talks through various business models and apps. I am surprised that most of these people who come to me are hardly 25/26 years old and they have mastered the art of making money. And when they contact me, I say that look, neither I am to make money, nor I am to make a name. You want to use it, you use it.

So, in praise of this knowledge it says that you attain superior knowledge, you receive equal treatment from all and no ignorant being, one who doesn't know Brahman, will ever be born in the family. So the idea is that the U is superior and more advanced than A. That is the similarity. While explaining all Acharya Shankar says, your friends, your enemies they will all respect you for your knowledge. On to Mantra 11.

Then comes the third. M. Mandukya Upanishad must be a very old Upanishad. Because the expressions they are using, the words they are using are pretty old.

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सुषुप्तस्थानः प्राज्ञो मकारस्तृतीया मात्रा मितेरपीतेर्वा मिनोति
ह वा इदं सर्वमपीतिश्च भवति य एवं वेद ॥ Mantra 11 ॥

Prajna whose sphere is deep sleep is M (म) the third dart (letter) of AUM, because it is both the measure and that wherein all become one. One who knows this (identity of Prajna and M) is able to measure all (realise the real nature of the world) and also comprehends all within himself.

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There is a similarity between Prajna, deep sleep and M. It is not M, but M as silent. So there is a similarity between the third letter and the third state and the subtlest Prajna. So there is Prajna, there is Sushupti and there is M. These three are one and the same. How are they the same? Because they are the measure of everything, Greek philosopher Protagoras said "Man is the measure of everything". Similarly M is the measure of everything. Prajna is the measure of everything. Sushupti is the measure of everything. Why? Because actually everything comes out of that. You may recall that Prajna is causal. There is gross, there is subtle, there is the causal. Prajna is the cause from which the other two states emanate,

Sushupti, that is the seed from which sprout the other two states. This was explained earlier. Now it says just like that M that is the seed from which the other two letters emanate. Because it is moving towards silence. It is the measure of everything. So actually says that Prajna or Sushupti is like the container of the other two. And M is like the container of other two letters. Moreover the other two states seem to merge in that . Like when you go into sushupti, you don't remember anything. Neither you remember your dream, nor are you conscious of your waking state. Same thing happens in Prajna, same thing happens in M. How? They say that if you keep on telling AUM AUM AUM it starts sounding like maum,maum maum..ultimately M remains. If You keep on repeating AUM AUM AUM ..what happens.. You see A and U slowly they merge into M. Just like the two states of waking and dream, merge into dreamless. And the master says that the gross and the subtle, they merge into the causal. Hence this similarity.

Now Atman thus has similarity, Atman has the quarters, AUM has the letters. Atman and are one and the same as far as name and the named are concerned. Also they have equality from the standpoint of quarters and letters. This AUM is Atman. That is why when you repeat AUM, it takes you to realisation. Every mantra in India begins with AUM. Unless it is some shakti mantra. You just have to add AUM to any mantra and it becomes a mantra ready to realise. AUM purifies everything. A lot has been written on AUM because of this similarity. So says prajna, whose sphere is deep sleep is M the third letter of AUM, because both are the measure and also because in them all become one as shown. He who knows this is able to measure all. And also comprehend all within himself. If you can master this third quarter, this relation between M and Prajna, you know all the minds. Also know that everything has its existence within you. Here it is Sushptasthanah Prajnomakarah tritiya matra mite - mite is from miti .. miti is to measure.

सुषुप्तस्थानः प्राज्ञो मकारस्तृतीया मात्रा मितेरपीतेर्वा मिनोति - Sudhuptasthaoh Pahno makarstrita matra Mitera piterva minouti - that is a measure . Both are measure and also there everything seem to merge into one. So Visva and Taijas, they merge in Prajna, Jagrat , Swapna merge into sushupti, A U merge into M. And you become powerful.You know all the minds You know that everything in this universe stays within you.

Acharya Shankar very clearly adds that Sadhan stuti Artham, the praise in all these three mantras that have been made, is because the teacher wants that the student be induced because people want to be successful, people want to be powerful, even those who come to learn the Upanishads they want to be powerful. They want to be known. So it is an inducement. But as you go deeper, slowly you feel that you don't need all these. They simply fall away. So with these three mantras which explain the similarity between A U M and the quarters of Atman we just covered we move to Karika 19

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विश्वस्यात्वविवेकयाक्षामादिसामान्यमुत्कटम्।

मात्रासम्प्रतिपत्तौ स्यादाप्तिसामान्यमेव च ॥ Karika 19॥

When the identity of the Visva and the sound (letter) A is intended to be described , the conspicuous ground is the circumstance of each being the first (in their respective position) ; another reason for this identity is also the fact of all-pervasiveness of each

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It means that when it is desired to describe the identity of Visva and the letter A the chief ground given is the fact that they are first in their respective sphere. Visva is the first in its sphere and another reason is the all pervasiveness of each of them. What we described just now. Acharya Shankar has explained this. So Karika 19 also reiterates what we explained. And Karika 20 now

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तैजस्स्योत्वविज्ञान उत्कर्षो दृश्यते स्फुटम्।

मात्रासंप्रतिपत्तौ स्यादुभयत्वं तथाविधम् ॥ Karika 20 II

The clear ground of realising Taijasa as of the same nature as U is the common feature of "Superiority". SImilarly another plain reason of such identity is being in "the middle"

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Same thing that we explained earlier. The common feature of superiority we discussed with the example of tree and the fruit, tree and flower. And the reason is both of them are in the middle. And Karika no 21 explains just now what we discussed

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मकारभावे प्राज्ञस्य मानसामान्यमुत्कटम्।

मात्रासंप्रतिपत्तौ तु लयसामान्यमेव च ॥ Karika 21II

Of the identity of Prajna and M (म) the clear reason is the common feature; i.e., they both are the "measure". The other reason for such identity is another common feature , namely all become one in both Prajna and M.

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There is a similarity between Prajna and M. How? Both are the measure.And another reason is that everything merges in them.

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त्रिषु धामसु यत्तुल्यं सामान्यं वेत्ति निश्चितः।

स पूज्यः सर्वभूतानां वन्द्यश्चैव महामुनिः ॥ Karika 22 II

He who knows without doubt, what the "common features" are in the three states , is worshipped and adored by all beings and he is also the greatest sage

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He who knows for certain the similarity between the three states and the three letters of AUM, A U M, based upon their common features is worshipped and adored by all beings. And also as a great sage. So if you can go on contemplating between Visva, waking and A and finally realise their identity and then from there you move on to AUM, you become a great Sage. You don't have to realise God.

So then there is Karika no 23 which concludes this section,

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अकारो नयते विश्वमुकारश्चापि तैजसम्।

मकारश्च पुनः प्राज्ञं नामात्रे विद्यते गतिः II Karika 23 II

The sound (letter) A helps its worshipper to attain to Visva, U to Taijasa, and M to Prajna. In the "soundless ". there is no attainment.

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Through meditation on A the seeker attains Visva, through meditation on U , Taijasa and through meditation on M , Prajna. Meditation on the soundless brings no attainment. That means by saying that , now comes the fourth, the silence of AUM. It doesn't bring any new attainment. Because you become what you are. Chatturya the fourth. The fourth state is no state. It is no attainment. You are that. Silence of AUM is that.

So that was one section that we discussed, similarity between AUM and Atman.

Initially when we had discussed AUM, as Atman, it was from a different standpoint. Now it is from a different perspective.

16. Beyond Death and Rebirth

We are now taking up Mantra 12 of Mandukya Upanishad. This is the last Mantra of this Upanishad. The Karika will continue.

We need to remember that, starting from Mantra 1 to Mantra 12, they are neither logical conclusions, nor are speculations. These are realisations by the sages in the depth of the meditation and silence , where the mind has reached that state where the mind appears to be merging but it has not merged and at times merged. These are two conditions, when a person really gets truly illumined.

After coming down from that state, what these Sages taught became the basis for Vedas and Upanishads etc. This is true of all religions.

In my book "The world of Religions" you will see how in every religion there are prophets who go into the depth of meditation. In Judaism, in Christianity, in Islam, in Buddhism, everywhere,it is the same. So why do we have so many Gods? This is because you are face to face with the infinite. Infinite is not one. Infinite is infinite You can be one with the infinite but can never know infinite. And when the semblance of mind remains. Then infinite appears as a projection of your mind. Something like looking at a huge mountain through a window. However, that mind is yours. So what you perceive will be hugely coloured by the background in which you grew up. So the description given by Jesus will be different from

say the description of Sri Ramakrishna. Because Jesus and Sri Ramakroshna grew up in different backgrounds.

Naturally you will ask what about this popular saying God is one. This is the biggest nonsense you might have heard. God is never one. God is infinite. No one says God is one. Those who say, it is just to create a strong society of their own, of their ilk. God is not one. God is infinite. Depending on what kind of mind you have, you may perceive God as some form. Or with some quality. And that is why we have different religions.

What we are discussing here, starting from Mantra no 1, are the realisation of the sages and we cannot question because if you question, you need to go into the depths of meditation and see what happens. Now fortunately for the Hindus and that happens only in Hindu religion, there have been many sages unlike in most other religions, where there is one great prophet, or one great teacher or founder of the religion, who has some experience and based on that a religion grows up.

Hindu religion is encyclopaedic. And you find that many sages, particularly in our own times, Sri Ramkrishna had all these experiences, and he has repeatedly talked about those things. So questions don't arise.

So do not expect the Upanishads to be logical the way mathematics is. In the case of Mathematics, there is a particular system where 1+1 becomes 2 and 2+1 becomes 3 This derivative logic. Upanishad is not about logic. This is intuitive knowledge. To know whether or not this is true, you need to go into the depths of meditation. Without this one cannot know. It is a very important thing that should be remembered.

And secondly, we have been discussing AUM is Atman and AUM is everything. And how this AUM has three quarters A U M / अ उ म. And the universe that we see, it also has three quarters, and the matching was done A/अ with the waking state, U/ उ with the dream state and M /म with the dreamless state that is Sushupti.

Now comes the Finale. In Indian traditions generally they tell you whatever they have to tell at the beginning itself. It was said that AUM is everything. And towards the end also they are reiterating.

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अमात्रश्चतुर्थोऽव्यवहार्यः प्रपञ्चोपशमः शिवोऽद्वैत
एवमोङ्कार आत्मैव संविशत्यात्मनाऽऽत्मानं य एवं वेद ॥ Mantra 12॥

That which has no parts (soundless), incomprehensible (with the aid of the senses), the cessation of all phenomena, all bliss and non-dual AUM, is the fourth and verily the same as Atman, He who knows this merges his self in the Self.

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It is a very beautiful Mantra. That which has no parts, which means soundless, incomprehensible, that is you cannot comprehend it through the senses. And cessation of all phenomena, it is all bliss and non-dual AUM. This is the fourth and verily same as the Atman, This is known as Amatrah - अमात्रः . No parts. He who knows this merges his self in the Self. So, the expression Amatrah.So when you say AUM, and then M/ म is followed by silence, that is AUM-silence.

As we discussed earlier,chanting of AUM has become so popular. Chanting is good. But remember that chanting is just like prayer. It may get answered, it may not get answered. But meditation will always get answered. Because that is your real form. You are that real you. Being real you nobody can deny that. It is the fundamental difference between prayer and meditation. You pray to an external deity, an external God. who like your mother may at times oblige you and at times may not. But that which is yours, nobody can take away. Meditation means being with yourself. We already discussed that A/अ is equivalent to the external world, A is the waking state. Similarity was drawn between U/उ and the dream state. And M/म it was said that it is like a receptacle and then there is the silence. This silence is actually अमात्रः - amatraha - it doesn't have any parts.

Now see, actually this mantra is very simple. But there are very subtle things here, which you need to comprehend. Here when they are talking about Amatraha, they mean to say the real AUM, the sound. Not with the parts A ,U, M. So naturally the question arises then why did you discuss these parts? That we shall see later.

The real AUM, that which we are discussing, basically means when you pronounce AUM, three sounds are being used to express an idea. Expressed what? Express the soundlessness.

Here comes the crux. When you use three sounds A U M , AUM, the sound AUM represents the soundless AUM. Because every sound has to become silent. Now sound has to become soundless. Sound represents soundlessness. But soundlessness does not point at sound. This is a very interesting argument they use. But mind it, these are not arguments. These are just stating a fact. Whenever there is sound you don't advance to stop the sound to soundlessness. But soundlessness does not signify sound. Amatra, AUM, AUM means actually the soundless. And the sound AUM which we use during Japam or as we are discussing right now, is a pointer to that soundless state. And that soundless state of AUM, which is the real AUM is one with the Atman, not the AUM the sound that we are making. So what about A being the same as the waking state? We shall see.

Now before we continue explaining this mantra we will need to seek help from Yoga Sutras. I will suggest that you listen to our talks on Raja Yog. It will be of great help. At least the first

two or three lectures. We had mentioned earlier many times that this is an object. The object has a name. That is a sound equivalent. Here is this pen. Pen is an object and pen is also a word. Suppose you all are sitting in a room, suddenly somebody shouts snake, the impact of that word snake on you will be the same as having seen a real snake. If someone shouts fire it will have the same effect on you as seeing the actual fire breaking out. This is because the mind does not know the object. Mind does not know the word. Mind sees things as ideas. Mind does not see the present and the past. Mind sees them as ideas. Mind does not see something as real, something as imaginary. It sees that as ideas. Mind does not see something as real and something as a dream object. Mind sees only the idea. This Pen can appear to mind as an object, as a name, as a word, in your imagination, in your dream, in your thinking, in your memory. It can come in any of these forms.

So one can compare the mind with a weighing scale. Weighing scale does not distinguish between gold and iron, or Aluminium or Plastic. Put something on the weighing scale, it will say this is the weight. Mind is something like that weighing scale. It knows everything only as an idea. It knows nothing else. So here is this pen as an object, as a name, as a memory, as coming in a dream etc. So this is just an idea in my mind.

Those of you who have been students of philosophy, or who have studied philosophy, particularly the western philosophy, where they are talking about idealism and all, it is such a fascinating subject. But as far as Indian philosophy is concerned, they are not interested in intellectual gymnastics. They are interested in the truth behind this phenomena, this universe and get out of it. So how to get rid of this pen? You will say why? Just throw it away in the dustbin and get rid of it. If you have pain in the body go to the doctor and take a pill and the pain goes away. But the pain may come back after the effect of medicine is gone. And this pen can go away once it is put into the dustbin, But mind does not know that. Mind will keep this pen in imagination, in memory, it can come in dreams. As far as seeing it is concerned, that will be gone but I may go on searching for my pen where that pen is..like that. So if you really want to get rid of this pen the only way is to get rid of the idea of this pen. Once the idea is gone one will not see the pen in whatever form.

Many of you have babies. Maybe three or four or five years old. You will see that these kids don't know what thief means. What it means to be a thief. Particularly if they are younger. To them that idea does not exist. In fact you will be surprised to realise that most of the time when we argue with people, particularly the youngsters, they simply argue because they do not have an exposure to an idea. Once they have an exposure to the idea, they will not be arguing about it. When they say God does not exist, what they actually mean to say is that the idea of God has not entered their head. Or the idea of God which has entered their head is in the form of a chimaera, something a false idea. Similarly when people talk of some kind of idealism, patriotism let’s say. So when the British were here in India people who wanted

freedom for the country, they were patriots. But the British government treated them differently. So it is about perspective. How your idea is treated by your mind and if that idea is not there in your mind, it does not exist for you. When you are living with an idealism, anything communism, patriotism or any other, you cannot get rid of it. It becomes true to you.Gandhi lived with the idea of Non Violence for so long. It was true for him.

Then comes the next step. Can you consciously get rid of an idea, which is there? In certain cases we can. For example you trust somebody and somebody breaks your trust., So the idea of trust related with that person cracks forever.

But here we are dealing with a much more serious problem. We are dealing with the world.. We are dealing with birth and death. We are dealing with Mukti, freedom. Someone whom you loved, wanted to do anything for that person, suddenly found that that person turned out to be a cheat. Now what mind does is, it attached some qualities, earlier there were some qualities, now those qualities are shifted and some other qualities have come. But that is really freedom. Because you thought of that person earlier with love. Now you think of that person with hatred. The person remains.

But to get out of this cycle of birth and death, to get out of rebirth, you need to get rid of the world itself, waking state, the dream state, the dreamless. The way the magician makes something vanish, takes a coin and makes it vanish, just like that. The world has to vanish. If you cannot make the world vanish, the world will come again again and again. As I told you , I can put this pen in the dustbin, and I can pick it up again. The pen goes the way it comes back. Everyday the Sun sets in the west and every morning it rises in the east. Exactly it goes on. So how to get rid of this world? Because that is the goal of every Upanishad. Upanishads are the scriptures of Mukti. Freedom. For that we will have to take help from Yog as a means. So when it comes to Yog Philosophy, it says that the mind is all about ideas and these ideas are always active in the mind. And these ideas are of five different kinds, which we have discussed in Raja Yog. We need not go into that detail. Then what Yog teaches is that you slowly focus and try to reduce the number of ideas that are there at one time in your mind.

So, it says, first reduce the number of ideas there at any one time. This is the practice of Yog. And from there you proceed further and then make these ideas irrelevant, completely irrelevant. It actually happens. And then finally Yog says that you reach a state where there is only one idea. It is called Samprajnata Samadhi. We are not interested in the technicalities, which we have discussed in talks on Yog.

The ideas concerning the universe, it is not a one solid idea. And we have the testimony of the greats that it is very difficult to get rid of that one single idea. But you will have to. If you don’t, you will have to come back to this world again. Even when you have reached that

state of concentration, where the whole universe can be brought down to one single idea, even then you have to be born because one idea will once again give rise to further ideas. However if you succeed in getting rid of that idea too, then there is complete cessation of ideas, technically known as Chitta Vritti nirodh. What happens then? Swarup Abasthan. You are in that state which is your nature, which is your true nature. Swarup Abasthan. Thus Yog discusses controlling the mind and completely getting rid of this world. This is what Upanishads also do from an entirely different aspect, and says that in case of Yog you take help of devotion, you take help of meditation, the Guru teaches you how to meditate, and from there slowly you learn to subdue the number of ideas, subdue the mind. Actually,very often people ask us how to control the mind. Mind is never controlled. It is the number of ideas at one point of time that has to be reduced. How to do it? Focus on one idea. Others will reduce. Such a simple thing. And what Upanishads are saying is that you realise that there is this sound AUM, which we have been discussing in previously , A is equivalent to waking, etc, and now they are leading to the soundless state, where there is no sound, where there is no division. This is what Yog also says, Chitta Vritti Nirodh. Just see how every scripture, every philosophy teaches the same thing. Definitely some differences will be there because when you take up a different approach.

For example, here I am in Kolkata and I want to go to Delhi.There are many ways that I can go. I can take trains through different routes, and flights through different routes. With different routes, the sights will be different but the destination will be the same. So sights offered by the Upanishads will be different from the sights offered by Yog.

Well I know Hindu scriptures, so I can talk about Hindu religion. As far as other religions are concerned they are the best to talk about it. So, once you reach that level, as Yog says, Chitta Vritti nirodh, where there is a complete cessation of the idea of the world. When It is completely removed, burnt, nothing remains, that is known as Nirbeej or Dagdhabeej, - the seed has been burnt. He cannot come back to the world ever again. Because he knows the truth. Jesus also says beautifully in the Bible, know the truth and truth will free you. You know the truth, once you know that , you are pure consciousness. You can never again be bound by this world. By this insentious - Jara Bastu.

So now comes the final. Turiya. Turiya is the same as Chitta Vritti Nirodh. In Chitta Vritti Nirodh, every idea, every possible idea has been uprooted. Why? Because the mind does not exist. In this silence that we are discussing here, there is no mind. This is a state of no mind. And so the world ceases to exist. Jagrat, Swapna. Sushupti all these cease to exist. So what this mantra tries to say is that, Turiya is not a state just like Jagrat, Swapna, Sushupti. Because Jagrata leads to swapna and Swapna leads to Jagrata. Swapna leads to Sushupti, Sushupti leads to Jagrat or Swapna. Turiya is not a state like that. So Turiya will never get

converted into Jagrata Swapna or Sushupti. So Turiya is not a seed that gives birth to Jagrata, Swapna, Sushupti, waking , dream and dreamless. So soundless is not that which produces A U M (अ , उ , म). Rather A U M , Aum, is a pointer to soundlessness. Now because of this, we get something very fascinating. But you will stay that Ok, Fine, wonderful. You say that there is soundlessness. Ok fine. I agree. And you say that there is Turiya which is not a state, but it has been referred to as the fourth. And you say that, it does not give rise to the other three states. Then where do these three states come from? We want to know what is the waking state, dream state and dreamless state , deep sleep. You say AUM is everything but where do these three things come from? Here comes the crux of the Upanishads and this is where Advaita is mistakenly attacked by other systems of philosophy.

Upanishad says that these three states that you are seeing are like a mirage. It is like seeing a snake in a rope. There is a very beautiful example. Swami Vivekananda was once staying at a place where he used to see that there was desert and there was lake. He thought there was a lake. One day he was walking in that area and he felt thirsty and wanted to go towards the lake. As he kept walking there was no lake. And suddenly he remembered , oh this is a mirage. And he returned. And Swamiji writes that next day onwards, he would still see that lake but he knew it was a mirage. This is the difference. A mirage is where a lake appears without any water and from the actual lake you can drain out its water and you can also fill it with water. Greats like Ramanuja and greats like Madhwacharya, and greats from other philosophies, keep attacking Advaita on this. Where does this Avidya reside? These sages start saying, while you go into depth of meditation and will see that this cannot be proved. The moment you are asking for a proof, you are asking to explain through your mind, something which is beyond mind. Advaita, this Amatra that is being described, is a state that is soundless. This soundlessness, everytime we are using soundless is not about physical sound. Because soundless is also an idea grasped by the mind. Here when they are talking about soundless they mean to say that which does not create any idea in the mind. Cessation of all ideas.

There was a question whether Trikal me Jagat nahi hai (The world does not exist) is true? So, there are three kinds of frauds. One who cheats your money - physical frauds. There are intellectual frauds - that is very dangerous. They present some intellectual ideas before you and then they cheat you. They are the big ones. Then there are spiritual frauds - they are the masters. So when Marxists say, religion being the opiate of the society, they are right in a way. Religion can be opiate because religion can cheat you thoroughly, And entire Marxism itself is a Mega fraud. Just come up with some ideas and juggles etc. Intellectuals are worse frauds than the fraudsters who take your money away. Trikal me Jagat nahi hai ..this is one

of those great frauds , because the person who says that this world does not exist, has to be someone like Sri Ramakrishna, someone like Lord Buddha. And the person to whom this is being told, has to be somebody like Swami Viveananda. Rest everything is fraud, utter nonsense. The world is very much true. If it were not true, Upanishad would have not talked about A U M, would not have talked about waking, dream and dreamless. Our Swami Ranganathanandaji Maharaj used to make fun of this kind of Vedanta. He had been once to Haridwar and went to visit some Ashram and some ladies were coming out. So he asked what did you hear? Vedant ke badi badi batein (big words about Vedanta) . Keya badi badi batein (what are the big things) ? Akash se Pran ka janma hua (Pran has come from the sky). Utter nonsense. Under normal conditions we will not teach these things. Here we are teaching as it is a course of the University. Otherwise Never. Anybody coming and talking to me about Advaita I will just drive them away. Advaita is meant for people who have reached that high state. It is not meant for ordinary people. The world is very much true. Why shouldn't it be? There is sthul jagat, Gross world, the world that we experience. There is Sukshma Jagat, - the world of ideas , and then there is Causal world - Karana jagat. Karan Jagat is where you experience God. God with form. Sukshma Jagat is where you experience Gods like Indra, Mitra, Varuna . Sthul Jagat is where you experience incarnations. And where you experience happiness, joy ,misery. And beyond these three are the Mahakaran, Turiya, Amatra, Chitta Vriiti Nirodh.

Hindu religion, unlike any other religion, says it is your choice. You tell what you want. Do you want Sthul Jagat? Well it comes with a package. It will give you joy, it will also give you tears.You want heaven. There also you will have jealousy and uncertainty. And you want Karan Jagat - causal world, you will have your world, you will have your God, but God whenever he is coming down, he may ask you to come down. Like Sri Ramakrishna asked Swami Vivekananda to come down. And then there is Mahakaran. So people talk about Mahakaran. Something like you know, you go to a lottery seller, he will always be telling you about the huge amount you may get in case you win the lottery. They will never tell you that you may not win the lottery. It is entirely your choice. Some people love this gross world, some like the sukshma. Some like Karan Jagat. Advaita focuses only on Mahakaran. And depending on what school of thought you belong to you will say this alone is true. For example, materialistic philosophy will say that religion is the opiate. For them this Sthula Jagat, the gross world that is the truth and everything is trikal me nahi hai, Trikal me Ishwar nahi hai. When you study the Vedas, and when they talk about Mukti, and not they put too much importance on this world, for them Sukshma Jagat is everything. When you study Christianity, Islam etc or even our Rammanuja they talk about Karan Jagat, as for them that is the most important. That being near their own chosen deity, near God. Advaita talks about the fourth, so all these are Sri Ramakrishna repeatedly says, he takes all the four. And one

should take all the four as you never know till you are in this world, you are having this mind and because you are with this mind, your mind will keep on moving. Sometimes it will go to Karan Jagat, Sometimes to Sukshma, sometime to Sthula Jagat.

Coming back to our original point, this Turiya is not like a seed which gives birth to other trees. Rather that alone is the truth like gold and the other three are like the jewellery or the ornaments. However what they mean to say is that it is not really substratum. The other three, they are like illusions. And this you can realise not through arguments. This you can realise only through realisation.

Now we come down to what we have been discussing. It was mentioned that , which has no parts, soundless, Turiya has no parts. And **अमात्रश्चतुर्थोऽव्यवहार्यः प्रपञ्चोपशमः** - it is incomprehensible completely, in the sense that you cannot know it through the senses. Now why are Upanishads talking about all these? They say that the great teachers and great students as we mentioned and we have solid examples In Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, or we have in Gobindpada and Shankaracharya, they just say one word and they understand. But the mediocre students need to be told repeatedly in various forms so that they can meditate, they can think and then they can understand. Ordinary students they will never understand. So Advaita is not meant for everybody.

This Turiya, Amatra, is the “fourth quarter” which is not a quarter but the whole on which the quarters are imagined. So AUM is not really the substratum. It is a reality. It is a complete reality. You need to understand that it is a complete whole and it has no parts. And as we mentioned, that the name and the object come as ideas to the mind and to the mind they are the same. Once you have realised that there is a complete cessation of ideas you realise that consciousness alone exists. Atman alone exists. Whatever was appearing was actually imagined by the mind.So naturally the question comes, where does the mind come from? Well this is a mystery of which we have no answer. This is Maya. So essentially there are two things: consciousness and mind. So there is consciousness that produces the mind. This production of mind is known as Maya. Now when the mind looks at consciousness, the mind goes in different states. When the mind goes in different states it sees consciousness and so in the waking state the mind sees things differently, in the dream state it sees differently and ultimately the mind is actually experiencing only consciousness. And when the mind ceases to exist, what remains is nothing but pure consciousness. And the mind does not have a real identity. Mind is Maya, created by Maya. It stays in Maya and it merges in Maya. It never has any independent existence. If you really want to understand religion and spirituality, you just need to understand what consciousness is and what is mind. Cessation of mind, once the mind ceases to exist as described in the Yog and as described

in the Upanishads in a different way, the mind can never come back. Its game is over. So what happens in this state? All phenomena stop. Phenomena of the world stops. And then it is all bliss. And naturally it is all bliss. Because we discussed earlier that the misery is because you have this feeling that you will lose something. The fear of loss is misery. When you know that you alone exist and nothing else exists, how can you have any kind of fear? However from the standpoint of the relative world as we are we seem to have this waking and dream and all this. But from the standpoint of the absolute it is nothing. When I was young, I used to talk to my Acharyas and my teachers and they would always say look, everytime you talk, everytime you argue you are falling into the pit of dualism. Getting out of the pit of dualism is a very difficult thing.This is something that I have realised. Practising Advaita getting the glimpse of wholeness is difficult. Seeing things from the perspective of Advaita is something difficult. But not impossible.

अमात्रश्चतुर्थोऽव्यवहार्यः प्रपञ्चोपशमः शिवोऽद्वैत एवमोङ्कार आत्मैव - This Atman and AUM, they are one and the same. Atman is the cessation of all phenomena. Onkar is the cessation of all sound, all activity, all mind. There is no mind. Because there is no mind, there is no universe, there are no phenomena. So संविशत्यात्मनाऽऽत्मानं य एवं वेद - One who realises this merges his Atman into Atman. This idea comes in every Upanishad where Atman that identifies with this body and mind, once it realises its true nature, it immediately becomes one with the whole. It does not merge in that sense, but it becomes one with the whole. Because there is no part. It is not that something enters something. It then realises that the part was an imagination. So, all this waking , dream , are all imagination. And the gross world, the subtle world, these are all imagination. But this is from the highest standpoint. If you say, prove to me logically, it is not possible. One has to experience it. When Jesus could not prove logically that God exists, it is something that you have to experience. And when you realise this, the most important thing is that you will not be born again. That means you will go beyond birth and death. Also here **एवमोङ्कार** - Aumkar is Shiva not Lord Shiva, and Shiva means auspicious. And it ends with **संविशत्यात्मनाऽऽत्मानं य एवं वेद** , which means, one who realises the truth, he makes his Atman enter Atman.

Ultimately how do I gain if I know something, how do I gain? You won't be born again. Because the moment you are born you have to go through all this suffering. Those of you, who have read my book Kratu, Kratu is a funny take on this problem. Kratu is cursed in such a way that he retains his memory. And every time he is born he cries, “Oh my God here now I have to experience all this”.

Now this is where, Vishista Advaita and Dvaita and other systems of philosophy attack advaita.That ultimately you will have to come down from that state, from Nirvikalpa

Samadhi. No you don't come down from that state. You already know it. It is knowledge. It is not a state. We have been discussing the state, but Atman is not a state. Turiya is not a state. It is completeness. Once you reach completeness, then you realise that there is no coming and going. It is a very simple argument. Till you are in the waking state, you will be going to the other two states. Or in deep sleep, you can go to the other two states. Turiya, Atmajnan, Amatra, these are not states. These are wholeness. These are complete. Because they are complete, there is no coming and going. Had it been like achieving something, say you achieve Atmajnan, it is not really achieving. You become what you are. Under normal conditions, you are becoming something different. You are trying to become something. The moment you “be”, you “be”, you don't have to become. Once you know that AUM, this is Aamatra, I am one with, I am Atman, who will be born again? Where? Because this idea of time and space does not exist. Because there is no time and space, where will you be born? There is no time and space. This whole discussion is actually meant for people like us so that we can think, repeatedly and we can meditate on these ideas, so that finally we can have a perception of Advaita and lead a life accordingly. Well once you realise that अमात्रश्चतुर्थो - The fourth is Amatra it is not a part, it is not a state, once you know this, you are no more born. You are free from the cycle of birth and death forever. And this is Mukti.

17. Being a Sage

So we have completed the last Mantra, that is Mantra 12 of Mandukya Upanishad. We have also discussed Mandukya Karika up to Sloka number 23

We shall now discuss Karika 24 to Karika 29 here. That would conclude the first chapter of Gaudapada’s Mandukya Karika. This chapter as discussed earlier is called Agama Prakarana.

These Karikas show how a person can become great from ordinary. Normally we think that one has to be a super achiever if he wants to be great, from being ordinary. Nowadays, with this cyberworld there we find that many people are being extremely famous. Because they are the regulators of the cyber world and that makes them famous. In earlier times, those who were the regulators say in politics, they had to take help from the news media and sometimes the news media was not ready to cooperate. But nowadays you will find that with all these social media, somebody comes in a position to control the media and because of that they become very famous.

But here we are not talking about that kind of fame and success. Here we are discussing how to become a sage. A monk, if told that he is behaving like a corporate executive, will be

extremely offended. He will also be extremely offended if someone says that if a particular monastic organisation runs like a corporate organisation. These are great insults.
But if you tell anybody in the world, be it a corporate executive or a doctor or an engineer that his behaviour and attitude is like a sage, he will consider this as a great honour. He will feel elated.
That is why, even now people aspire to be a monk. I have always wondered why. In spite of all the criticism that religion and spirituality gets, being a sage is the ultimate human destiny. And people even now respect renunciation and sacrifice. This is almost universally true.
Recently I came across a comment on our youtube channel, where somebody was trying to prove that Karl Marx was the greatest of the sages. I loved it. Marxism that calls religion as the opiate, wants to present Karl Marx as a sage! You don't have sage in literature, you don't have sage in music. The term sage exclusively belongs to spirituality. What is there in being a sage? In fact we have named this chapter as “Being a Sage”. How do we become a sage? To be a sage means to be otherworldly. To be a sage it is to move away from the world. So Marxism that teaches only money matters and the famous book communist manifesto that says workers of the world unite, you have nothing to lose, but your chains are all about the world. Yet its founder is being portrayed and is presented as someone other-worldly because sage belongs to the realm of the other world. How to be one? This is what Mandukya Karika describes. But from the standpoint of Aumkara.
Starting Karika no 24, the discussion goes to how to be a sage.

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ओंकारं पादशो विद्यात् पादा मात्रा न संशयः ।
ओंकारं पादशो ज्ञात्वा न किंचिदपि चिन्तयेत् ॥ Karika 24॥

(The meaning of) Aumkara should be known quarter by quarter . There is no doubt that quarters are the same sounds (letters). Having grasped the (meaning of) Aumkara, nothing else should be thought of.

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Sage is considered to be one who is compassionate towards all, one who is not interested in the world, and things like that. But Mandukya Karika is describing this from the standpoint of AUM. It was earlier said that AUM, A U M / अ उ म, these three relate to the three states of existence, waking, dream and dreamless. A U M also relate to the gross world, subtle world and causal world. What lies beyond it is Turiya. As far as the Atman or universe are concerned, it does not have any cause and effect relationship. When we talk about Atman, when we talk about AUM, when we talk about Turiya, there is no cause and effect relationship there. This point is very important to remember.
A simple question like who created God ? you can ask a Muslim, who created your God. God creates. You can ask a Christian. But you cannot ask this to a Hindu. Because, God is

Swayambhu. When we say Shiva, we say Swayambhu Shiva. God is Swayambhu, self-existent. If it is self existent, how can it be created? The highest of the philosophical ideas, highest of spiritual thoughts that these sages had, have entered the common vocabulary of a Hindu. So asking all these questions like who created God etc are meaningless questions.. He is self-existent and so is Swayambhu. The Lord is Swayambhu.

So we have these three states and we have the fourth which is not a state and there is no cause and effect relationship.

ओंकारं पादशो विद्यात् पादा मात्रा न संशयः - Gaudapada is asserting that don't have any doubts. Aum should be known quarter by quarter. There is no doubt that quarters are the same as letters. Having understood Aum, quarter by quarter, one should not think of anything else. To remind you, this is about Sadhna. As we shall see in the last Karika, they will say that, if you have a theoretical understanding of these things, they are useless, they are of no use. Karika is talking about how to be great. If you have a great teacher and you have exceptional competence as a student, something like Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda, or Govindapada and Shankaracharya, then they tell you the truth "You are Brahman" and you learn it. But that is exceptional. Others are either mediocre students or dull. By dull we do not mean dull the way it is normally understood, but we mean spiritually dull. Most people are spiritually dull. And if you ask me personally, I would say I am spiritually dull. I have no qualms about it. Being spiritually mediocre is a big thing. A very big thing. Most of us are spiritually dull, but you keep on practising, be into the system and slowly you pick up certain things. Forget about being a bright person, I am not even a spiritually medicare person. Gaurdapada says, if you want to grow spiritually, then think and meditate on this idea that AUM is everything. To remind you, in Hindu religion, every mantra of whatever sect, begins with AUM. Because the ultimate goal of every mantra, whatever be the mantra, whether you belong to Shaiva sect, or belong to Vishnu sect, or Ramayet, every mantra starts with AUM. AUM is the unifying factor of all the Hindu sects. Because it was mentioned how A U M / अ उ म these three letters are basically sounds. It encompasses all the words and words and objects are not different. We have been discussing these in detail and we will have more of these discussions as we go along.

So you need to meditate on AUM. How? It is not that one fine morning you suddenly wake up and realise that AUM is Atman. That is not possible. The growth is slow and arduous. First you outgrow the gross world. Then you outgrow the subtle world. And then you outgrow the causal world. And then you realise that AUM is Atman. Let me explain briefly.

Gross world is the physical world that is there before us and even without knowing you have been enamoured by it. We are attracted. We love this thing, we love that thing. If not anything we will have an ideology but you need to overcome all that.How do you overcome? By knowing it.

Knowledge gives you power and power gives you detachment. When you meditate on A /अ the focus of mind becomes so strong that suddenly you let go of the physical world. And then you would say I don't want anything from this physical world. More importantly I can attain anything in this physical world. Do please understand the tremendous power, when you say that I can attain anything in this universe, and yet I want nothing.

In the Gita, Lord Krishna says that there is nothing in this universe that I cannot get and yet there is nothing that I want. It actually happens. For example, when you are studying in school, and after you have passed may be say class 4 exam and you go to class 5, if you wanted you could study in class 4 again. But you don't want to, as you have overcome it. The knowledge that you attained, made you to outgrow class 4. Just like that you outgrow the physical universe.

And then comes the subtle universe. The universe of heaven. And the universe of refined pleasures. You actually come face to face with that during the meditation. And after death you go there and you have to outgrow that too. It is very difficult. And then comes the causal world. The causal world is where you are face to face with God. Every religion, irrespective of the religion that it is, talks about this causal world only. And you cannot cross it in any way. Sri Ramkrishna had meditated on Kali. When Totapuri saw him and wanted him to train in this what we are discussing. So when Sri Ramakrishna wanted to meditate on the formless, every time mother Kali would appear before him, He could not go beyond. One cannot. Well these things sound like stories, fantasies, only when you have really entered the spiritual world, you realise what exactly happens. And all the stories, so-called fantastic stories from the spiritual world of different religions, are not fantasies. They are truth. Sometimes some covering is added, sometimes some spices are added, so that you can grasp it, but just remember the physical universe, the subtle universe and the causal universe offer their own attractions. And you just cannot get out of it. Here we are so tied down with our physical existence; we want money, we want sense pleasures, bodily pleasures. We can't even imagine what happens beyond that. But here we are discussing not the ordinary person. We are discussing one who wants to grow spiritually and Gaudapada say beautifully **ओंकारं पादशो विद्यात् पादा मात्रा न संशयः** - don't doubt that these are related, A/अ waking and the physical world. So by conquering A/अ , through contemplation one gains power, power gives knowledge, and knowledge gives power to outgrow something. And that is how one becomes detached. It is a very simple process. Acharya Shankar beautifully explains, evam omkarejnate drishtatham adrishtatham va na kinchit proyojanam- Once you have conquered A then U and the M, first physical, then subtle then causal then you are no more fascinated by anything that is visible to you or anything that is not visible to you. Which means the

pleasures of this world or the pleasure of heaven are no more of interest to you. You realise that you don't want them. You will outgrow. How would you outgrow? Through power. Because outgrowing happens only when you know that thing. Like many of you who are interested in travelling, there are many in Kolkata who like to go out every year. They say let us go to some new place, as we have already visited that place. You have no more interest in that. Now you have no need. You have outgrown it. This power comes through meditation, contemplation and knowledge. But the first is knowledge. This is what Mandukya Karika is giving us. So, you go beyond it. But this is an instruction to the would-be aspirants. Says don't you ever think of anything worldly and that is how you will overcome it. If you are into meditation, if you are into spiritual life, you must make sure that never for a second you think of anything related to the world or anything related to the heavenly pleasure. That makes us move to Karika 25.

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युञ्जीत प्रणवे चेतः प्रणवो ब्रह्म निर्भयम् ।
प्रणवे नित्ययुक्तस्य न भयं विद्यते क्वचित् ॥ Karika 25 II

The mind should be unified with (the sacred syllable) Aum. (For) Aum is Brahman, the ever-fearless. He who is always unified with Aum knows no fear whatever.

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It is a beautiful sloka again. The mind should be concentrated on AUM. That is how you proceed.That is why Mantra is given and you go on repeating the Mantra a lot. Slowly you need to focus your mind on AUM. and Aum is **प्रणवो ब्रह्म निर्भयम्** - brahma Nirbhayam, means fearless. **प्रणवे नित्ययुक्तस्य** - and anyone who is always absorbed in AUM knows no fear whatsoever. Fear is always of the unknown. When you are afraid of the known there also you are afraid that he might do something which is unexpected or maybe you don't want it. You don't want to lose yourself. The bottom line is that we don't want to lose our individuality. Fear actually means that. Fear of losing your individuality.

The number of people that may possibly die in a nuclear attack on one city is much less than the number of people who die in road accidents every year in India. Yet we are more scared of the Atomic Bomb than road accidents. You may check the statistics.This is because of unknown fear and you feel that you will lose your identity, you will lose yourself. So losing your identity. A wealthy person does not want to lose his wealth. A famous person does not want to lose his reputation. But once you are established in Brahman, once you are established in Atman, there is nothing to fear. Because you know that there is no cause and effect relationship. Who praises you, who blames you, these things do not matter to you any more. They are out of it. So how is it done? Mind should be concentrated on AUM. that is **युञ्जीत प्रणवे चेतः** - Your mind should be so focussed on AUM. Those of you who have

listened to our talks on Raja Yog, they will find famous sutra - **तस्य वाचकः प्रणवः**- Tasya Bachak Pranavah - Patanjali discusses various steps of realisation or various steps to spiritual growth, and then he simply cuts across and make things simple and simply says Ishvara pranidhaana va. You can bypass this arduous path simply by focussing on God. How do you focus on God ? - तस्य वाचकः प्रणवः- Aum is the way. You meditate on Aum and everything is attained. Those of you who might know something about Yog , Yam-Niyam-Asana- long process, and ritualistic prayer, those of you who have been in organised and ritualistic prayer, those of you who have been in organised religion would know that you have to do this, you have to do that.

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(Yog has eight Parts: Yam (self control), Niyam (following rules), Asan (Postures), Pranayam (breath control), Pratyahara (controlling the senses), Dharana (concentration), Dhyan (Meditation), Samadhi (deep meditation))

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But if you really want to grow spiritually, you don't even need to do all that. You can do it, no problem, because that is also a path. The simplest thing is to be one with God through AUM. - तस्य वाचकः प्रणवः- Tasya Bachak Pranavah. This is what Karika also says. See how they are related. We are discussing Mandukya Karika and it is saying the same thing as Raja Yog. And these two are again the same as the Mantra that you might have received from your Guru. Aum Namah Shivaya - same - there is no difference.

Hindu religion, in spite of all these huge numbers of scriptures and sects, is extremely unified. Completely unified. Mind should be focussed , mind should be taken into AUM.

प्रणवो ब्रह्म निर्भयम् - It is Aumkar. If you get established in AUM, you get completely out of all fear. There is no more fear. How can there be any fear? Because there is no cause and effect relationship. Importantly AUM is the King of the Kings, God of the gods. It is the supreme as we shall see. So if you are into Aum, you are completely out of fear. Not only fear but also desires and wants.

Basically it is the importance of thoughts. Under normal conditions, when we think of ourselves, we think of ourselves as limited beings. And so we are always scared of losing our individuality. But as you focus your identity with AUM, you are now moving from the individual to universal. And once you become one with the universal, naturally all fears go away, as there is no individuality there is no smallness.Who can destroy the infinite? There is no way.

However, the expression for this concentration, is as Acharya Shankar says, “Yuktasya”, one who is always concentrated, one who is always connected, one who is always into it. Like a newborn, like a young baby, who never leaves her mother, just like that, do not even for a moment leave AUM. Be totally immersed in AUM. Your fears will go away, your desires

will go away, your wants will go away. Because fear, desire and all such things belong to the limited. AUM is unlimited. This is now explained in Kariika no 26.

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प्रणवो ह्यपरं ब्रह्म प्रणवश्च परः स्मृतः ।

अपूर्वोऽनन्तरोऽबाह्योऽनपरः प्रणवोऽव्ययः ॥Karika 26॥

(The sacred syllable) Aum is verily the Lower Brahman, and it is also admitted to be the Supreme Brahman. Aum is without beginning (cause), unique, without anything outside itself, unrelated to any effect and changeless.

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Now AUM is being described. AUM is the Lower Brahman. AUM is the Higher Brahman. Upanishads talk about Para Brahman and Apara Brahman. The English language is a very crude language to express our Indian Philosophy. And so we have to use terms like lower and higher. It does not mean lower and higher strictly in that sense. Para is that which is beyond. Apara is not beyond. Which is near. So AUM is everything. And what do they mean by Para and Apara?

Apara Brahman is , when you meditate on Lower Brahman, when you think of Lower Brahman is something which is worshipped. So people of every religion, be it Hindu or be it any other religion, they all worship Lower Brahma. Because Lower Brahman is meant for people of dull intellect. Spiritually dull. We are spiritually dull, mind it. Dull is a not good word but the idea is non-illumined, spiritually non-bright. People may think that they are bright. But they are not. No offence is meant. Because even I am like that. So **प्रणवश्च परः स्मृतः** - if you are someone who is spiritually bright you follow Para Brahma.

Who is not spiritually illumined, who does not consider himself spiritually illumined, you need to focus on Apara Brahma. God with form, God with a name. In certain religions they say God is formless, but they give God a name. Such a huge contradiction. Whether you give a form or give a name, it is all the same. Whether you give an adjective, it is all the same. Basically you are worshipping Apara Brahman. What is Para Brahma? The Higher Brahman. The formless. **अपूर्वोऽनन्तरोऽबाह्योऽनपरः प्रणवोऽव्ययः** - Aum is beginningless. And unique. Unique means only this exists and there is no other existence. And there is nothing outside it. In no way. The hell, imagined by people of Abrahamic religions, even that exists only in God. And it is unrelated to any effect. And it is immutable. Immutable means it does not change - **ऽव्ययः.** Spiritually bright ones, those who can really catch fine ideas, those who are very good in catching brilliant ideas, those who are spiritually bright. Sri Ramakrishna also used to say about some of his disciples who used to come to him. Oh he is bright, catches ideas so fast. If you cannot catch ideas very fast, no matter, nothing. Hinduism has something for everyone. Hinduism is the superstore of the religious world. Others are mere

shops. Here you have a way out for everyone. Hinduism is not a drill, not military like. Hinduism is not that, It is open, it has freedom. There is something for everyone. If you are of ordinary intellect,, mediocre intellect, focus on God, God with a form. Surrender to God, pray to God. If you think you are bright, think of God as **अपूर्वोऽनन्तरोऽबाह्योऽनपरः प्रणवोऽव्ययः** - beginningless, unique, nothing outside it, unrelated to any effect and inimitable. It will reflect in your daily life. Once I met a young lady, highly ambitious and a drunkard to the core. And she told me I don't believe in God with form. I believe in the formless God. I said, yeah, that suits you. When it comes to worldly pleasures you are into everything. And you talk about formlessness. It is easy to say that I am an Advaitin and I want to know about Advaita. I believe in **अपूर्वोऽनन्तरोऽबाह्योऽनपरः प्रणवोऽव्ययः** - no not possible. It has to reflect in your daily life. Just in passing it was the great monk Srimat Swami Mokshadanandaji Maharaj, Ram Maharaj as we called him. I have mentioned him many times, and he taught us Mandukya Karika, when we were at Belur Math training centre. And we remember some of his words. I used to meet him often, hundreds and hundreds of meetings. Once he had said, if you can lead your life as per values of Advaita, you are as good as a jnani. As far as realisation of non-duality is concerned, that depends on God. It will happen in its own time. But as far as the external is concerned you are one with it.

Think of Advaita , think of Atman as Apurvo ananta oabahya anaparah. What is Atman? You are that. You are what ? You are unborn. Why should you fear death? And you are beginningless and you are unique. There is no one like you. So why should you have any jealousy? Why should you have any competition? It should show in your behaviour. And nothing outside you. Everything that is going wrong in the world is happening because of you. Because everything is within you. It is unrelated to any effect. So the enjoyment etc that you aspire for, is meaningless for you. Because nothing can give you enjoyment. Hold on to these values. Think of yourself as Param Brahma, Param Atman. Param the superior. That which is unborn. Which is infinite, there is nothing outside it. Think of yourself as that. Meditate on that. Contemplate that. Try to practise it in your life. How? Don't be scared of anyone. Don't be scared of losing anything. Don't be jealous towards anybody, Don’t hate anyone. Love all. Accept all. Can you do it? Stop using foul language. Stop using strong words. Stop having even the slightest idea of violence. By violence I mean strong thoughts against anyone. This is practical Vedanta. I hope the idea is clear.

AUM is a para Brahma, AUM is also Apara Brahma. See what happens, there are people who see this universe as real. In that case this universe comes out of AUM. As we said, Turiya is the receptacle from which dream and waking state comes. And if you are a superior student, one who wants to focus on the formless, you know that Atman alone has become everything. Everything else is mirage. This idea will be explained further in the next sloka. So

even if everything is destroyed, nothing else remains, AUM will remain, Atman will remain and each letter is a quarter so Atman alone will remain and there is nothing outside it. This alone exists. Then comes Sloka no 27

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सर्वस्य प्रणवो ह्यादिर्मध्यमन्तस्तथैव च ।

एवं हि प्रणवं ज्ञात्वा व्यश्नुते तदनन्तरम् ॥ Karika 27II

Aum is verily the beginning, middle and end of all. Knowing Aum as such , one without doubt, attains immediately to that (the supreme reality)

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Aum is indeed the beginning, the middle and the end of all things. He who has realised AUM, the immutable, immediately attains Supreme reality. In the previous verse AUM was described as Apara Brahma and Para Brahma. Now this is being elaborated.

In Indian Philosophy we have two theories of creation. One is known as SatkaryaVada where creation is actual, creation is reality as we see everywhere, something is created out of something. The Second one is known as VivartaVada. it means actually there is no transformation. And yet things appear. SatkariyaVad and VivartaVad. This was discussed in the first chapter where we discussed Vedaanta. These two different streams of ideas of creation, SatkaryaVada and VivartaVada. This sloka takes care of both. It says if you believe in SatkaryaVada say for example, Samkhya believes, the root cause of everything is AUM. Because they are the beginning, it has a middle and it has the end of everything.

Later we Hindus, developed the concept of Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva to indicate this idea. What are they? They are just manifestations of AUM. **सर्वस्य प्रणवो ह्यादिर्मध्यमन्तस्तथैव च -**

AUM is at the beginning, the middle and at the end of everything. So, if you are a believer in creation, if you want to enjoy the world a little more, if you still have desires for heaven, and most importantly if you still have a desire to have a vision of a your Ishta, chosen God, Sri Ram, Sri Krishna or anyone, then know this thing that actually Aumkar and your chosen deity, your Ishta , they are one and the same. So you just have to remove this for AUM and place your Ishta say Sri Ramkrishna and everything remains the same. Because AUM is Sri Ramkrishna. It was earlier said in Yog, how तस्य वाचकः प्रणवः- Tasya Bachak Pranavah -

when we say AUM, actually the name, name of what? God. Because Brahman and God are one and the same. Just that difference lies in Para Brahma and Apara Brahma. Higher and Lower, the formless and with form. They are one and the same. This is something people don't understand.

We keep on talking that Sri Ramakrishna stressed on two aspects of God and they are not different. The same thing you find in Mandukya Upanishad and Karika also. Sri Ramakrishna was not teaching something new. Many people wrongly think that Sri Ramakrishna was

teaching something new. There is nothing new in Hinduism, If somebody says he is teaching something new, be suspicious of him. Extremely suspicious. We are not naming those famous personalities, who during their time were star speakers, and who fizzled out with time. Because they came up with some new idea, something new. Let us not name them, But initially people appreciated it a lot, and when people with philosophical minds, those with high intellects, sharper intellect entered, they realised that it's all hollow. Because as far as civilization is concerned, there is nothing new in China, As far spirituality is concerned, there is nothing new in Hinduism. We have tried everything. There is nothing of this spiritual world that the Hindus have not experimented with. And they have discarded a lot of things. One of them is monotheistic God. The idea of God, that is worshipped in Abrahamic religions, we experimented with. In Vedas you come across mantras where it is about monotheistic God. But we discarded it. Well so, the ultimate conclusion is, God is AUM. and God is the beginning, middle and end of everything. In this sloka, the first line is from the standpoint of Satkaryavada, where there is actual transformation. The second line is from the standpoint of Vivartavada. Apparent transformation which is magical.

What is that? Acharya Shankar beautifully says that when water appears in a mirage, or magical elephants appear and once you realise that all these creations that are there, the creation of gross world, creation of subtle world and the creation of causal world, is all just like the appearance and disappearance of mirage. You become one with AUM, you become one with Atman. The term they use is Tadatma Bhava. It is a beautiful word, in Sanskrit, you become one. When you pour a mixture of water and oil, in another mixture of water and oil ,water goes to water and oil goes to oil Because, in essence, oil is oil and water is water. Just like that you never become one with the world because that is not our true essence. But you become one with Atman because that is our true essence. It is our nature, a beautiful expression. Tadatma, Tat Atma..essence becomes one. They are one. It is not about something entering somewhere. Because if something enters somewhere, it only means that essentially they are not one. When we use adhesive, we are trying to put two different things together, that is adhesive force. If they are all the same they won't require any adhesive, Not even cohesive force needed. It is one and one and the same. And here is the beautiful Mantra no 28.

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प्रणवं हीश्वरं विद्यात् सर्वस्य हृदि संस्थितम् ।
सर्वव्यापिनमोङ्कारं मत्वा धीरो न शोचति ॥ Karika 28॥

Know Aum to be Isvara, ever present in the mind of all; the man of discrimination realising Aum as all-pervading does not grieve.

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You overcome all sorrow, you overcome all pleasures, you overcome everything. How? Once you realise that this Aumkar is the Lord of everything sitting within your heart. The

english translation is Know Aum to be Isvara ever present in the hearts of all. The calm soul contemplating Aum as all pervading does not grieve. A sage doesn't grieve over anything. He never experiences sorrow, he never experiences anger. Nor does he experience lust nor does he ever experience any wants. How ? He knows that AUM is in your heart. Why heart? Does it mean that there is something shining inside your heart? It is not so. AUM is all pervasive. However, when you go for meditation, the easiest spot where you can experience the divine light, where you can experience AUM is your heart. That is a truth, corroborated by practically every great saint. Even Sufi saints have talked about it. Meditating on the heart centre, sometime you meditate on nose tip and eyebrows, then head. Heart is really the great place for meditation. So why do you meditate on the heart? Not because God resides there. But because it is easier to find. Sri Ramakrishna used to give a very beautiful example. Think of a zamindar, a king. The entire Kingdom is his. He belongs to all the places. However the possibility of getting him in the palace is more. Just like that. He may take you around and say this is also me, this is also me. If you ever come to visit me, I am at the university, I can be anywhere. But the maximum possibility of getting me is where I sit and work. Something like that. But Atman is nothing physical. Atman is pure consciousness. It pervades everywhere. But the first experience that you can have, the easiest experience you can have is at the heart. So, once you know that your true nature is pure, your true nature is infinite, you cross over all sorrow. Nothing can touch you, nothing can hurt you. This is the way to be a sage. Sage is one who doesn't get perturbed by this or that. What is the real meaning of sage? When we say that Einstein was a sagely scientist, it means that he was not perturbed by ordinary things.

Now to Karika 29, the concluding Karika of the first chapter of Mandukya Karika.

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अमात्रोऽनन्तमात्रश्च द्वैतस्योपशमः शिवः ।

ओंकारो विदितो येन स मुनिर्नेतरो जनः ॥ Karika 29॥

One who has known Aum which is soundless and of infinite sounds and which is ever-peaceful on account of negation of duality is the (real) sage and none other.

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One who knows AUM, which is soundless. By soundless we mean the fourth which is not the cause of anything and where no cause and effect relationship works. And it is also endowed with infinite sound. So AUM is a beautiful thing. It is soundless and yet endowed with infinite sound. We have discussed earlier how it happens. Who is all good and has all negation of dualities, is a real sage, none other.

अमात्रो - Amatro. Matra means to measure. So AUM is something which cannot be measured. It is beyond measure. Once you know this, realise this, you have reached the state of Shiva, auspicious,. Everything is auspicious for you. And then **ओंकारो विदितो येन** -

once you know Aumkara, you become a Muni, a sage. So the real sage is one who has known Aumkara. How do we do it? How to be a real sage? Know Aumkara. Does not mean that you need to have spiritual experiences. Even if you know theoretically it works. How theoretically? Know Aumkara to be Param Brahma, Aparam Brahma. Aparam Brahma is one the Lord who creates, who maintains and who dissolves. And when you think of AUM as Param Brahma, superior and see it as infinite, immutable, and then your life becomes like that. Life becomes accordingly. Your behaviour with every one is like that. And you realise God alone creates, God alone dissolves. Then you become a sage, a muni. Acharya Shankar adds Netorojanaha - others are not sages. Shastravidapi - Even if a person knows all the scriptures, he is not a sage. If you have studied Sanskrit, you are not a sage, If you studied scriptures you are not a sage. If you can speak very well, you are not a sage. You know, often we see people who are quite popular in the cyber world, sometimes their followers may be paid followers, they call them sages. Sometimes they put ads as sages in their own name. No you are not a sage.

You are a sage, you are a muni only when you have known Atman. Atman is the cause of everything, and yet beyond the relationship of cause and effect. So that brings to the end of the first chapter of Mandukya Karika - Agama Prakarana.

CHAPTER 2

Mandukya Karika - Vaitathya Prakarana

18. The Argument why world is unreal

Now we start the second chapter of Mandukya Karika which is called Vaitathya Prakarana. We already mentioned that Mandukya Upanishad was told by the sages, thousands of years back. Then Gaudapada wrote the explanation in Karika and Acharya Shankar wrote the commentary.

You may find this chapter a bit difficult and at times even unacceptable. The name Vaitathya Prakaran comes from the term Vitatha (वितथ) which means untrue, false mithya. So Avitatha (अवितथ) means that which is true, which is real.

For every religion that is there, Buddhism, Islam, Christianity or any other, or even Vaishnavism that we have, what is the proof that these religions are correct? It is not that only the present generation has been questioning like this. The authority of religion in present times is often challenged and kids keep asking why should I believe it? And a new expression has come: “I am spiritual but not religious”. Whatever that might mean, people do say things like this. People coin new expressions just to sound cool. This issue, whether or not logical, was there even in ancient times. Just remember that Hindu religion is the encyclopaedia of religions and approaches religion from various directions. There are the words of the sages and their explanations. There is also pure logic and pure argument. This second chapter is trying to prove the unreality of existence, existence that we understand, the three waking, dream and dreamless through sheer argument and pure logic. You may or may not agree with the arguments that Gaudapada forwards and Shankaracharya explains. However, just to think that thousands of years ago the sages and thinkers of Hindu religion, were trying to present spiritual truths entirely on the basis of logic and argument, without taking help of the scriptures is phenomenal. You don't find it anywhere. Nowadays you will find in America, many Buddhist organisations are trying to present their religion as something logical. And there is also this new term Neo-Vedanta. They don't realise that while they present these modern avatars of Buddhism and Neo-Vedanta, whatever that might mean, essentially they are only talking about psychology. They are popular speakers on Vedanta but they talk mostly about psychology, instead of talking about core Vedanta. Because that appeals to the masses.

But spirituality is not meant for the masses. Even then our ancient masters tried to present it as logically as possible. Now if I go verse by verse, it may be difficult for you to get a complete picture of it. And you may not even be able to grasp what exactly these Karikas are saying. So we shall first present the gist of the first ten verses. What exactly they mean to say and how they proceed.

The most important thing that Acharya Shankar says is that religions like Buddhism and Jainism will not accept, is that the Vedas are the ultimate reference book, when it comes to scriptures. That is the main difference between Buddhism and Hinduism. For the Hindus, the Vedas are Pramana, the ultimate book where truths can be tested, where you take some statements, some spiritual truth and see whether or not that is there in Vedas. For a Muslim Quran is Pramana, and for a Christian, the Bible is the Pramana. Pramana does not mean sacred book. Pramana means that against which the veracity, the truth of a statement can be tested. It is like weighing something on a scale to find out what the correct weight of it is. So the Quran is a Pramana, The Bible is a Pramana, Ved is Pramana. But Buddhists do not agree . They say that Vedas are not Pramana. To them the words of Buddha are the Pramana.

When you go for arguments the Pramana has to be made absolutely clear. The parameters, the perimeter must be made absolutely clear, otherwise there is no end to arguments. When most people argue, they don't know what they are arguing about? Somebody says something, others says something entirely different. Ancient Indian logicians had mastered this and laid down the way how the arguments are to be conducted. Those with a respectful attitude towards learning, not necessarily the Upanishads, will find these arguments very interesting.

What Gaudapada does is that he takes the nature and character of the dream state. And it is through this that he demolishes the philosophy of the Buddhists and the Jains. And the same arguments can be used against other religions. I don't name them. Mandukya Karika, the second chapter begins with analysis of dream. Freud had this analysis of dream. But his analysis is something different from what Gaudapada does. The first thing that you notice about dreams is that whatever happens in the dream, the objects that you see, events that you see, are not bound by space and time. The most important criteria is that they are not bound by space and time. That means you can see objects which are of peculiar, strange size and you can travel huge distances during dreams. Whereas you might have dreamt barely a few seconds. These things we shall cover once again when we go through the Karika. Right now, I am just presenting a gist before you.

Now if something is not bound by space and time, (unlike say my pen and this pen is bound by space and time) , that is what Einstein talked about the fourth dimension. These are fixed. Space and time. For Newton there were only three dimensions. What Karika says since

these are not bound they do not follow the laws of Newton or of Einstein, that clearly indicates that dream objects are only in the mind. You might say this is something so obvious. Yes but it has implications later. Many of these explanations, commentaries particularly by Shankaracharya, say something and it appears trivial, but you find that it was not trivial, because it has implications later. So what happens in a dream is that you are perceiving something. Dream is characterised by perception. You perceive something and that perception is not bound by space and time. It implies that the entire perception is only in the mind. Now being perceived, that is the act of perception, the act of perceiving this being common, using the different expressions and different parameters of Indian logic, which we will discuss little later. It is said that, that being the common factor, perceptions of the waking state too are unreal. We know dreams are unreal. And dreams are perceived. And when you perceive dreams, they are not bound by time and space, implying that it is all in the mind. Now that act of perception, the act of perceiving being common, other parameters which we will discuss when we proceed. That being the common factor, the common issue, the waking state also is unreal. That is the first set of arguments that is used in Karika.

The second argument is that which does not exist in the beginning, and does not exist in the end, how can you say that it exists in the middle? Now this is a phenomenal statement, which we will discuss when we come across that sloka. The argument is very simple. Something which did not exist in the beginning and it stopped existing at the end, how can you say that it exists only in the middle? In Gita, Sri Krishna also says **अव्यक्तादीनि भूतानि व्यक्तमध्यानि भारत। अव्यक्तनिधनान्येव तत्र का परिदेवना।।** (2:28) - In the beginning they were not there, in the end they will not be there, and suddenly they appear in the middle, why bother about it. It is a very interesting argument.

Now the waking state is contradicted in the dream state, exactly the way, dream state is contradicted in the waking state. They will be using all these arguments and we will be seeing more of it as we proceed. And interestingly, the reality of one does not affect the reality of the other. So even if you had a full meal, you might feel that you have been hungry in the dream state. You might have taken water and yet you might feel thirsty in the dream. So the reality of the waking state at times gets contradicted in the dream state, which means even though a thing appears to be real gets contradicted in the different state. Which means it has an ending. So, well then why is it that you see strange things in a dream state? And those things are not seen in the waking state. You might see a flying elephant, you don't see them in the real world. It is peculiar to that state of perception as in the case of heaven. In heaven, you have King Indra, the example that they have used, and Indra is believed to have a thousand eyes. You can have such things in heaven. Because when you go to heaven and see things in heaven, the perception related to heaven is peculiar to Heaven.

Similarly, perception related to waking state, is peculiar and particular only to the waking state and same is with dream. So you cannot say that simply because you see a strange thing in the dream, they are not real. Because this argument will be taken up. The things you see in the waking state, you don't see in the dream. Like, though not always, what you see in the dream, often they are contradicted in the waking. It is peculiar to that state; special to that. Nothing wrong with it. Perceptions are peculiar to that state of existence. So your argument does not hold. And sometimes we think that, waking state is superior because we know the distinction between real and unreal. Because in the waking we know, oh! I was dreaming. When you say I was dreaming, essentially you mean to say that you can distinguish the real of the waking and the unreal of the dream. But something similar happens in the dream also. There are occasions when you dream, in the dream that you have been dreaming. So in the dream state also you have at times the feeling of the real and the unreal. So you cannot say that the waking state is any way inferior to the real.

Karika and Shankar conclude that all objects whether seen in dream or in waking state, be it subjectively imagined or objectively perceived, are mere states of mind. Whether it be imagination, whether it be dream, whether it be memory, whether it be so called the real world, the external world, they are mere states of mind. This is what Yog calls Vritti. Everything is Vritti, nothing else. So why do we pay too much attention to the waking state? It is a very stupid thing. When people talk about being scientific, being logical, they are taking the waking state as the gold standard. And here comes Gaudapada, demolishing this superiority of the waking state, in relation to any other state. And hence concludes that the waking state is in no way superior. Consequently the waking state is as unreal as transitory as the dream state. What is real is that which has its permanence through all the three states and permanence through all these arguments. Thus begins Karika

This is what the ten verses of Mandukya Karika will be trying to tell as we proceed with them. And as we proceed, we will see what they say. So this begins the second chapter and Acharya begins with the unreality of duality and says “Davitasya (The duality) Vaitathyam Vitatha (Mithya)” - So what is the truth? Non-dual state, Advaitam. Sri Ramakrishna also says Advaitam. Advaita is the last word.

Now what is the greatest enemy of Advaita? Davita. Me and you. But without Dvaita where is the fun? Indeed there is no fun in Advaita. Advaita is that state of being, which is full of bliss. Fun as we understand is related to the senses. You don't have senses in Advaita. So the choice is yours. You go for fun or you go for Bliss. If you go for the Bliss you will miss out on fun. If you go for fun, you will miss out on Bliss, the unalloyed bliss. Because we have not tasted it you don't know this bliss. Sri Ramakrishna has explained it, that once you taste that bliss, beauty of great Apsaras like Rambha, Menaka will appear to a man like ashes in the cremation ground which is considered inauspicious. We are so happy with the fun in this

world, we don't care for the bliss. We have absolutely no idea about what that is. And when you do not have an idea about something, you are generally not curious about it, you are not eager about it. So, the Karika 1 of Vaitathya Prakarana begins.

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वैतथ्यं सर्वभावानां स्वप्न आहुर्मनीषिणः ।

अन्तःस्थानात्तु भावानां संवृतत्वेन हेतुना ॥ Karika 1॥

The wise declare the unreality of all the objects seen in the dream, they all being located within (the body) and on account of their being in a confined space.

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The wise declare the unreality of all entities seen in dreams, because they are located within the body and space there is confined. Dream is considered to be unreal. Why do you declare dream to be unreal? Because things that you see, even though they may be of huge size, they are seen within you, which is again limited. So they have to be unreal. Subjects are within the body. For example you may see that you are sitting on an elephant and taking a ride. Or you have gone to the Himalayas, you are seeing the beautiful peaks of the Himalayas. The Himalayas are huge and your body is limited. What does it mean? The Himalayas and the elephants are within you obviously. And that is why this is not possible. Such a huge mountain, huge animal cannot be located within your body. Which means it is unreal. And that is why, **वैतथ्यं सर्वभावानां स्वप्न आहुर्मनीषिणः** - Manishi here is defined by Acharya, means wise person and who is a wise person? Acharya says one who is logical. So Manishi is one who is logical, that is Pramana Kushala - Pramana is proof. Manishi is very good at judging things. Judging how? With very clear parameters. How do we consider a statement true? Not because the Quran says it, not because the Bible says it, not because Ved says it. There have to be very clear parameters for the Hindus - Shruti, Yukti, Anubhuti. There must be tradition to it, it must be logical and one must be able to experience it anytime, anywhere. Beyond that different system of philosophies in India they have different Praman starting from one to six. Yog Philosophy, which has really mastered these things, believes in three pramanas. They say Pratyaksh, Anuman and Agam. That is what we see through senses, logic and word of Scriptures. Surprisingly each of these systems of Philosophy lays a lot of stress on what you gain through senses. Sense knowledge, your experience is considered to be the greatest test of truth. So, Acharya Shankar explains that since huge things are perceived within the body, which is not possible they contradict. Because they contradict, the object must be unreal. Young kids who may be 3 or 4 years old, cannot distinguish between the dream and the real. Because they cannot distinguish, they get totally confused. I remember when I was a kid, those were the days of my first schooling days, and I dreamt that I lost my notebook and slate. Earlier kids used to write on slates. I was crying like anything in my dream and I woke up and continued crying for a very

long time, till I was soothed by the elders, they showed my copy and the slate and said look everything is there. Even then I had difficulty correlating. As we grow up, we learn to distinguish. When we have some kind of mental sickness, sometimes, we lose that line between the dream and the waking. They tend to get mixed up. There is an objection that says , simply because something is seen within something, does that mean that it is false, unreal. For example I am sitting inside a room, does that mean, it is unreal. No it is not real. Because of the limitedness of the space, the area of this room, the volume of this room is larger than my volume. But objects that you see in the dream, their volume is much more than the volume of your body, So that is the argument. Simply because one thing is inside something else, does not mean that this will be unreal. So it is just an argument because these greats, I mean persons like Acharya Shankar, take care of every possible attack that might come. This argument, this Karika is from the standpoint of space and the second one comes from the standpoint of time.

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अदीर्घत्वाच्च कालस्य गत्वा देशान्न पश्यति ।

प्रतिबुद्धश्च वै सर्वस्तस्मिन्देशे न विद्यते ॥ Karika 2॥

On account of the shortness of time it is not possible for the dreamer to go out of the body and see (the dream objects). Nor does the dreamer, when he wakes up, find himself in the place (seen in his dream).

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The dreamer, one who is dreaming, due to the shortness of time involved, cannot go out of the body and see the dream objects because sometimes, you dream barely for a few minutes. You doze off in a bus, or in a train, or when just about to doze off in your bed. My favourite story is that there was one gentleman who had gone to send a telegram during the second world war. As the gentleman was writing the telegram, the telegram clerk dozed off and in the dream he felt that he had become a soldier and he was enjoying life, he had a married life this and that and then there was war, and during the he was fighting..there was a whole story there. And suddenly there was an attack by the enemy. And his head severed from his shoulder. And he woke up with a jerk and found that the pen in his hand had fallen down and made a sound. So he apologised to the gentleman who had come to send the telegram and said, sorry I kept you waiting for so long. The gentleman replied no I had not been waiting for long. It has not been more than a minute. So it was not even a minute so many things happened. Similarly there is the famous story of Narada and Lord Vishnu, when Vishnu had sent Narada for some water. And Narad saw a beautiful woman, settled with her, had children and there was floods, children died, the wife died and he came back to sense as Lord Vishnu asked him about the water he was to fetch.

Dreams do not follow the rules of space and time which we follow in the so-called waking state. So Acharya Shankar says that during dreams you cover a distance which in real life

would have taken a month. He says , 100 Yojanas (roughly eight miles per Yojana) one cover in a month by walking.But in a dream that takes a small time. More importantly in the dream you go and visit somebody. You are in America sitting here in Kolkata and it could look so real that one can even send a mail next morning telling you it was so nice to meet you last night and we had such a beautiful conversation. Here time and space are completely confused. You cannot tell them to be real. Which means these are unreal. And whatever is happening in the dream state is actually happening within your head. You will say this is obvious. Yes this is obvious. But now since they are building up the argument they will tell even the obvious. Those of you who have visited a court, might have seen the lawyers arguing, or those who have seen legal dramas movies, you will see that they will go on asking very basic questions. What's your name, what's your father's name, even though everybody knows everything.

Here is a narrative just to tell a beautiful story, it is kind of a joke. One elderly lady was called in the court as a witness to something. First came the prosecution and asked, lady , do you know me? Trying to prove whether or not she is sane, And she said, why wont I know you? I was there when you were born and we had such great expectations from you and you turned out to be such a rogue! Every evening you go for wine and booze, and have lots of extra marital relations, things like that. And this gentleman was embarrassed. Then the defence lawyer comes and asks something. And she goes on talking about his character from a small town. The judge calls both the lawyers and says, if anyone asks if the lady knows me, know that I will be putting both of you behind bars. So if you see these legal dramas, you will find that they ask very basic things like do you know me and if that person is really mischievous they will narrate your entire life history, which will not be worth listening to. So they are using this argument to build the final blow. Simply because you have visited a place in a dream does not mean that you have actually visited that place. Ok. But we Hindus we believe that whenever there is some kind of perception, be it seeing, be it hearing that the Gods, presiding deities, in eighteenth chapter of Gita, there is this, sloka adhisthanam tatha karta, karnam cha prithak vidam - **अधिष्ठानं तथा कर्ता करणं च पृथग्विधम् |विविधाश्च पृथक्चेष्टा दैवं चैवात्र पञ्चमम् ॥.** (Gita 18:14). (The body, the doer (soul), the various senses, the many kinds of efforts, and Divine Providence—these are the five factors of action) . Basically it says, Divine providence is necessary for completing work along with the work itself, the doer, the senses that are indriyas and efforts.

Now these scriptures say that there are the gods, gods with small g (the smaller gods) who look after the senses, maybe they are creating those dreams. But it cannot be. Because when you sleep, even when you are dreaming, not only your sense organs, even your

senses go to sleep. Because your senses go to sleep, the gods with small g they cannot be active. So it is not that they are creating.

The Idea is whatever you perceive is all because of the mind and everything is in the mind. Since everything is in the mind, the dream objects don't have any reality. So irrationality in time and space and non-functioning of the senses show that everything is in the mind. The entire dream state being in the mind, it is all unreal.

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अभावश्च रथादीनां श्रूयते न्यायपूर्वकम् ।
वैतथ्यं तेन वै प्राप्तं स्वप्न आहुः प्रकाशितम् ॥ Karika 3॥

Following reason, (as indicated above) Sruti declares the non-existence of the chariots etc, (perceived in the dream). Therefore it is said (by the wise) that Sruti itself declares the illusoriness (of the dream experience) , established (by reason)

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Since the objects seen in the dream are unreal, as explained earlier, this sloka asserts the reason for the limitation of space and time for the real existence of such objects. So we move to Karika 4.

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अन्तःस्थानात्तु भेदानां तस्माज्जागरिते स्मृतम् ।
यथा तत्र तथा स्वप्ने संवृतत्वेन भिद्यते ॥ Karika 4॥

Different objects cognised in dream (are illusory) on account of their being perceived to exist. For the same reason, the objects seen in the waking state are illusory. The nature of the objects is the same in the waking state and dream. The only difference is the limitation of space (associated with dream objects

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The different objects seen in the confined space of dreams are unreal on account of their being perceived. So they are being perceived and they are unreal. For the same reason, on account of their being perceived the objects seen in the waking state are also unreal. And the same condition, that is the state of being perceived exists in both waking and dreaming. It is perception in both states. The only difference is the limitation of space associated with dream objects. So the fundamental difference between dream and waking is that dream appears to be in a limited space, waking seems to be in a huge space. However the idea of perception is common. In both dream and waking states. Now, here enters the logicians. In the Indian logic system, there are certain parameters of logical conclusions. The first one is known as Pratijna, that is the proposition. Propositions means what you want to prove. Here the proposition is Illusoriness of objects. Whatever we perceive is actually illusory. If you perceive, it is illusory.

And there is Hetu. It is a very important expression. In logic it is the ground on which the logic stands. Here the ground is being perceived. Basically it is the cause and effect relation.

The result is illusoriness. Causes being perceived. The common thing between waking and the dream is being perceived, so “being perceived” being the common factor, this is known as hetu. We are not discussing Vedanta right now. We are discussing Naya, the Indian logic system.

The third one is Drishtanta. That is the example used or illustration used to prove. Here it is that objects are like the objects of the dream. This is known as Drishtanta.

So these are the conditions from Naya - Pratijna, Hetu and Drishtanta. And from there comes Relation. Sometimes we say that, we simply give an example and then try to reach some truth. But that is not permitted. They will say that you must have a Pratijna, you must have a Hetu and you must have a Drishtanta, and then we must have Hetu Upanyaya. What is the relationship? So there is a clear relationship between being perceived and the objects. Now the proposition taken is Illusoriness and being perceived is directly related. Because if the perception is wrong, then what you see is an illusion. So it is perfectly alright. The term Upanaya, how they are related.

Then comes NIgaman. Which means reiteration. Reiteration is the conclusion.Conclusion is that objects perceived to exist in dream are different from those perceived in the waking state, whatever the state be, however, the fact of being seen when they play the game of hide and seek, you see someone and the cover is blown. Simply because that they are perceived, whether that be in dream state or waking state, it is said to be unreal. Because it has been proven that, whatever you perceive in dream state is unreal. Everything is common in the waking state so waking state is also unreal. This is the first set of arguments. Whether or not you agree is not important. I told you in the very beginning unless you have studied Nayaa. And have some idea of Naya, you may not be able to understand this argument. They will say, whenever you are comparing two things, for example if somebody says that one is an idiot. How is one an Idiot? What is the common ground of being an idiot? So the grounds are settled that these are the grounds. And then they will say how the ground is related to that person. And then, simply because there is a relation does it prove that conclusions? It does prove the conclusion that the person is an idiot. Very often when we argue, these relations are not maintained. So the steps are : first is Pratijna (proposition). The second condition is Hetu - the ground of comparison. The third is Drishtanta - illustrations. And then there has to be Upanaya - it is the common features between the illustrations and what you are trying to prove. Because everything cannot be proved.

There are lots of tools used in Mathematics. For example, one of the tools is induction. You prove, you take something from the middle, you prove that this holds and then say that it holds all along.

Similarly another tool is Negation. You prove that this negation is not possible and hence this is true. So in Mathematics they use many different tools. The same tool doesn't work every time. Similarly in Philosophy when you want to prove something it is not that same thing that works all the time. Here they are using Drishtanta. Something which has been proved. The dream state has been proven to be unreal. Now you take this and apply it to the waking state. How ? in the process that we discussed. So Upanaya is there.and then there is Nigamanam - conclusion. So we have five conditions. These five conditions actually are used to reach a conclusion through a particular process in Naya. Acharya Shankar uses Naya to establish this truth.
So we move to verse 5.

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स्वप्नजागरितस्थाने ह्येकमाहुर्मनीषिणः ।
भेदानां हि समत्वेन प्रसिद्धेनैव हेतुना ॥ Karika 5॥

The thoughtful persons speak of the sameness of the waking and dream states on account of similarity of objects (perceived in both the states) on grounds already described.

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Those Manishi, thoughtful persons,speak of the sameness of the waking and the dream states on account of the objects perceived in both states, on the ground already mentioned as above in Karika 4. We discussed the grounds of similarity and based on this similarity the waking state is as unreal as the dream state. To understand this, one needs to be trained in Logic. The percentage of logical people are only few but most think of themselves to be logical. But if you set up criteria, you will find how hopelessly people around you are illogical. That was the first set of arguments. The second set begins with Karika no 6. (50.15).

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आदावन्ते च यन्नास्ति वर्तमानेऽपि तत्तथा ॥
वितथैः सदृशाः सन्तोऽवितथा इव लक्षिताः ॥ Karika 6॥

That which is non-existent at the beginning and in the end, is necessarily so (non-existent) in the middle. The objects are like the illusions we see, still they are regarded as if real.

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I remember when I was studying Mandukya Karika for the first time, when I came across this verse no 6, I found it so enchanting. Phenomenal. **आदावन्ते च यन्नास्ति** that which is not in the beginning and that which is not in the end, **वर्तमानेऽपि तत्तथा** it is not present in the in the present too. If it was not in the past and if it will not be in the future then it is not in the present too. You know this argument is as simple as it is majestic. There is nothing like a simple argument that is majestic. This is one of those phenomenal arguments used in Hindu system of thought. That which was not in the past , that which will not be in the future, how

do you say that it is present? This applies to everything. If you simply apply this argument in your daily life, lots of problems will go away in your life.

My favourite physicist is Richard Feynman whom I have read a lot; his biography,his memoirs. During the Manhattan project, and when the atomic bomb was finally dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, America became victorious, and Feynman suddenly lost interest in life. He lost interest in all work. And very often he would say , tomorrow an atomic bomb will be dropped, maybe on New York and everything will be over. Why are we living? With time he slowly came back to life. Similarly I read one story where someone succeeds in travelling to the future and finds that there is no one left. It is a long story. He suddenly loses all his interest. Why are we doing all these?

But the most interesting thing is, forget Richard Feynman, forget the protagonist of this story. As far as I am concerned, I know that everything will continue forever. We know that. Instinctively we know that everything is unreal and yet we continue with all these. As far as materialistic philosophy is concerned, they have no answer to it. Since you know that your journey is from the big bang to black hole, why are you running after all this?

So **आदावन्ते च यन्नास्ति वर्तमानेऽपि तत्तथा** if a thing did not exist in the past it will not exist in future, how do you say that it exists in the middle? Here important thing is **आदावन्ते च यन्नास्ति वर्तमानेऽपि तत्तथा**

As far as the waking state is concerned, it is juxtaposed between two dreams. Last night you dreamt, tonight you will dream, in between you have the waking state. And you know that this dream state was false, unreal as we just now proved. And tonight also you will dream you know. So your waking state did not exist between the two dreams, both of which will not exist, how do you say that this waking state is true? As discussed earlier in this chapter. In Gita, Sri Krishna told Arjun, abyaktdini bhutani ,byakt madhyani bharata abyakta nidhana tatrat aparidhe ..before you were born you did not exist, after you die, you will not exist, why bother about this life only? You cannot apply it in everything. But at times if you can apply, you will see that your mad attraction for things will go away. So if you analyse you will see that things did not exist, in the beginning, they cease to exist after a time, why pay attention? So the question is then raised that In the waking state when we feel hungry we eat. And there is a consequence to it, if we are thirsty we will drink. And there is a consequence to it. We are satiated. We fulfil. What about that? How do you say that is unreal?

Just remember the first set of arguments which says, Dream state contradicts the law of space and time so they are unreal. So it proves that the dream state is unreal. From there moves on to proving that for the same reason waking state is unreal, from the standpoint of logic, using the rules of logic.

Now a different set of arguments is taken up , saying that because they are not in the beginning, and not in the end, hence they are in the middle.
Then Gaudapada replies, it is not so. We shall take up that In the next Karika in the next chapter.

19. The Argument why world is unreal - 2

We are into the second chapter of Mandukya Karika. You must have got by now some idea about what Mandukya Karika is really about. It talks about the ultimate reality with as much logic as possible. But the supreme reality is beyond mind. There is no way that you can prove it or disprove it as we will see one after another logically. It is just not possible. At best it will take you to the maximum level, beyond that you have to apply your own mind. This topic may look difficult, which actually it is not. Most of us do not have exposure to this subject and hence it seems difficult.
But once you get into it, slowly the terms will become familiar, ideas will become familiar and then it will not seem difficult. Just keep in mind that this thing has been maintained in India for thousands of years. It is our own ancestors, cultural and spiritual ancestors who came up with all this. And they not only came up with this, but also they maintained it and the ideas are really wide spread. In India people in remote villages have some idea about our religion and spirituality. This may not be full, but they have. This is unlike in other countries, where higher religion is meant for the scholars. India does not look at spirituality that way. Here even the highest truth, highest vedantic truth percolated amongst the masses. That is the beauty of it. And Swami Vivekanada in his Lectures from Colombo to Almora, speaks of this. We also have a series of talks, in Bengali, on these lectures on our channel.
Now in the second chapter Gaudapada is explaining the sublime truths of Advaita entirely from the standpoint of arguments and logic. This is extremely difficult as it is counterintuitive. The nearest analogy is Quantum Physics, which is highly counterintuitive, at least people thought so in the beginning. It was so counterintuitive that even Einstein could not accept it. To think that you cannot know the velocity of something with perfection or position of a particle with perfection is so counterintuitive! You don't see such things in the world.
That is what Advaita Vedanta is about. It is counterintuitive but it doesn't come up with things like mirage. It does not come up with preposterous ideas. What Advaita Vedanta teaches us is truth as perceived and realised by the great sages and as presented to us most logically.
So when this second chapter began, it began with a bang, unsettling us with the idea that the waking state is as unreal as the dream state. Just imagine that the world in which we are living, the world that we are seeing is all unreal. If you start analysing the waking state

with the same razor-like precision as has been done in Mandukya Karika, it may become extremely difficult for you to lead your life.

Now this is not something that only Vedanta has done. This has been done in different countries by different philosophers. But in general people from any other country, other than India, are so worldly minded, so engrossed in worldly pleasures that it is difficult for them to accept such things. Unfortunately, this became the nemesis of India. This very thing ruined India. Because everything became unreal. And if you go to Hindi speaking areas, you will find people often talking about Maya and Moha. Everything is Maya , everything is Moha. But it is not so.

What Advaita Vedanta says is that the world is good the way it is. Don't attach too much value to it. Our problem is that we attach too much value to it. There are higher things in life. In The Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, we find how many times, how many different examples Sri Ramakrishna uses to explain this idea. The world is kind of lower level enjoyment. Why are we holding on to the world? For that matter, why do we hold on to some positions in the corporate world, to some job, or to some person? For example, the favourite example used in Vedanta and in daily life to explain what is Maya, even Swamiji uses this example, is of a son who brutalises his mother, and yet the mother continues to love his son. When we grow up, this continues. You love someone with all your heart and I have seen both ways from her to him and from him to her, and the other party is a complete charlatan.

Eric Fromm, the famous psychologist and philosopher, in his famous book, The Fear of freedom, wonderfully, talks about how scared we are of freedom. We keep on complaining of bondage but freedom terrifies us. The example Fromm used was from the French revolution. During the revolution, they overthrew the monarchy and guillotined them. But within a few years they had Napoleon as an emperor. So on the one hand they wanted to get rid of the monarchy and then they got it back. Many countries have thriving democracy and we say democracy is superior. But it is too early to comment on that. People are now getting a taste of freedom. Let us see how long it lasts. My personal experience has been that people really do not want freedom but like the idea of freedom. Young kids, 2-3 years old, love playing hide and seek. They cover their eyes and feel no one is looking at them. Their parents also go on playing as if they can't see the kid, who enjoys the game. The kid believes he is invisible.

There is just this false idea that I am free. No one is noticing me. When we do something wrong, something in public or in private, we feel we have this notion of freedom, no one is watching me. I can get away with that. But you can never get away with that, because people are watching. Similarly when you think of freedom, people who are asking for space, people who are asking for freedom, actually they want the idea of freedom. They don’t want actual freedom, because they cannot take, they simply cannot take the weight of freedom.

What is the weight of freedom? Lightness of being! Freedom is an extremely weighty object. Give people freedom and they will simply asphyxiate. You cannot breathe freedom.
The moment you have a God looking over you, overseeing your affairs and punishing you for your bad deeds and granting boons for good deeds, you feel safe that you have a God, and He is your guardian, taking care of you. But the moment you are told that you alone are the maker of your destiny, you feel good, but you cannot take it. It is not easy.
Advaita Vedanta is not for all. It is meant for the chosen bravehearts who can boldly say I want freedom. I am not very sure if you will really agree with things that I am saying. If you think over it, and let it sink in, you will realise that whatever I am saying is correct. You don't want space. You just want to feel that there is space. Architects and interior designers sometimes use mirrors to create that sense of space. Just like that we want to have a mirror in life to create that sense of space, to create that sense of freedom. If you are actually given freedom, you will not be able to take it. That is why, Advaita Vedanta is so difficult to comprehend, not because the arguments are difficult like the arguments used by Immanuel Kant. He uses such arguments that people can't even understand. Because he generally creates his own terminology and uses those terms and goes on talking and his terms have different connotations. different meanings in the real world, and he uses them in different senses and so ultimately it becomes so puzzling. He is no doubt grand. He is grand just not because I have read and understood, but because I have heard masters saying that. Even Swami Vivekananda quotes Kant. Actually it is always better to quote to form your ideas, based on what others think. That is what we do all the time.
However, arguments used in Advaita Vedanta are subtle, fine. Here Karika uses three sets of arguments. And through those three sets, Karika tries to make us understand that the value that we have been attaching to this waking state in the physical world is unfounded, biassed. We are biassed to waking state. If you start analysing, you will find that waking is as unreal as the dream state. Sri Ramakrishna used to tell a beautiful story that there was a farmer, from this story you get an idea how the highest ideas of Philosophy have sipped into the minds and beings of common man. The farmer got the news that his only son had died. He came home and his wife was shedding tears. And the wife says you have no heart and you are not even crying. And the farmer says, last night I had a dream that I was a King, and had seven sons. When the dream broke, nothing was there. Now I am in a dilemma whether I should shed tears for those seven lost sons or this one!
This is India. Sri Ramkrishna was not a story maker, not a storyteller. He must have heard this story from someone. Which means this kind of story is current in Vedantic traditions. And Sri Ramakrishna uses this story to convey the idea of Advaita jnana to commoners, persons who were listening to him. This is recorded in the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, And

today anyone can read that. Housewives, executives and those working in any sector. Anyone can read that. This is Hindu religion.

What Gaudapada is telling and Acharya Shankar is explaining is that, don't pay too much attention to the waking state. It is only as good as the dream state. Treat waking exactly as you will treat a dream.

One of our listeners says that dreams sometimes come true. And sometimes your cause-effect relationships in the world come true. If you analyse you will see, how many times this cause and effect relationship has been broken down. You have certain ideas and you try to apply that cause an effect relation everywhere, in most cases this cause effect relationship gets broken.Yet we believe that, actually waking state is all about cause and effect relationship and Gaudapada, as we proceed, will show how this is the biggest philosophical mistake we make.

When Physics came trumpetting over its opposition that is religion, starting Newton's time, and said, science triumphs over belief. What does it mean to say science triumphs over belief? Science triumphs over religion? You simply mean to say, the cause and effect relationship, which strictly belongs to the empire of mind, triumphs over something that is transcending the mind. Is that ever possible? Worse, the moment quantum physics came, even before that, Einstein came and the ideas that he gave are quite unbelievable. And when Quantum physics came, the whole thing shattered. No quantum physics will swear by cause - effect relationship as far as the quantum world is concerned, where there is no cause and effect relationship. We have been telling this since ages. Actually there is no cause and effect relationship even in the physical world. So what are they? They are just working models. Ask any doctor whether with the same medical problem the same medicine will work every time 100%? It does not.

Let me give you an example. Once when I was in Kanpur. We had a charitable dispensary and hospital and famous psychiatrist Dr. R K Mahendroo was there. He is a doctor of national fame and a household name in Kanpur. He was telling me that one gentleman came with some particular mental health issues. He gave him one medicine and he improved. Then his elder son, who also had the same problem, was given the same medicine and he improved. And then his younger son came with the same problem. He gave the same medicine to him. His condition aggravated. Dr. Mahendroo was saying "Swamiji, I just cannot make head or tail out of it." Same family, same genetic build , everything same, same condition and same problem and was given the same medicine and yet one person did not improve.

No doctor will say that there is a 100% cause -, effect relationship. And if some doctor is telling, believe that he is ignorant or he is cheating. Some patients get cured and the percentage of patients getting cured is on the higher side. That is all. So where is the cause

and effect relationship? We fool ourselves, just like an ostrich hiding its head in the sand dunes. We hide ourselves behind the screaming of cause and effect relationships.

The first set of arguments used by Gaudapada was that there is the similarity between dream and waking state. Gudapada uses Indian Logic that is naya to prove his point and Shankaracharya explains that and shows the commonality between the waking and dream is of perception. If you doubt the perception of one, you have to doubt the perception of the other. Where will you say that the value of perception is superior in one state than in the other? There is no ground for that.

The second argument says beautifully, as I said in the previous chapter- आदावन्ते च यन्नास्ति वर्तमानेऽपि तत्तथा- that which was not in the beginning, that which will not be at the end, it doesn't exist in the middle too. Ultimately this is the worst of the cause and effect relationship as we practise. For example, say this pen did not exist earlier, pen will not exist later, so how do you say that pen exists in the middle? Is it that? This will now be explained in verse no seven and then after that will come the third set of arguments. Now mind it, if you ask me personally and while talking personally, maybe I am talking emotionally or my understanding and my emotions are getting involved. These arguments will not be perfect but these are great pointers. When Swami Vivekananda was teaching Vedanta in America, he was using these arguments exhaustively when he was talking about the real "I" and the apparent "I" and things like that. Essentially he was using these kinds of arguments.

One may ask how does Anuman Praman (that is cause and effect relationship) play its role? Everything we are discussing is anumana pramana. These are not pratyaksha pramana (observable proof) . Because Pratyaksha pramana shows that this world is here. Anumana Praman means logic. Simple logic. By implication.

These sorts of questions may come to mind. But thinking will resolve the question. My favourite example is from Prashnopanishad. Sages came to ask questions to sage Saunak, he said look, stay here, meditate for one year, do perform Tapasya then ask me questions. If I know the answer, I will tell you. The idea is that, if your mind cannot give you the answer, then you are not ready for the answer.

But there is a difference between information and contemplative answers from within. When it comes to information, it cannot come from within. It has to come from outside. But philosophical issues do come from within.

My favourite teacher, Swami Mokshadanandaji Maharaj, Ram Maharaj, very often when he used to say something and I could not understand. He would simply say, think over. And the riddles and questions dilemmas they were solved may be after ten years, fifteen years of

reading. Not that I noted down something. But those were in the back of my mind. It just becomes clear.

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सप्रयोजनता तेषां स्वप्ने विप्रतिपद्यते ।

तस्मादाद्यन्तवत्वेन मिथ्यैव खलु ते स्मृताः ॥ Karika 7॥

The serving a purpose (as means to an end), of them (the objects of waking experience) is contradicted (opposed) in dream. Therefore they are undoubtedly admitted to be illusory on account of their (both waking and dream) being with a beginning and an end.

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The utility of the objects of the waking state is contradicted in the dream state. Therefore certainly unreal. Thus both experiences having a beginning and an end are unreal. We introduced this topic heavily, so that your mind becomes conditioned to these thoughts. Your mind becomes free of prejudices. And you are ready for it. The term is आदि अन्त - Adi anta - that which has a beginning and that which has an end. Why do we say that dream states are unreal? Because they have a beginning and there is an end. Beginning is when we come out of the dream, that is the waking state when we realise that when we are asleep and we are dreaming. So there was beginning to it. When we woke up, there was an end. Also something began in the dream and ended in the dream. That is why we say it is unreal. Mind, the great dictator, the monarch, creates a sense of continuity where there is none. Actually there is no continuity. Indeed as in quantum Physics, where quantum leaps, quantum jumps, life are all discontinuous, existence is all discontinuous, yet it creates the appearance of continuity. Whether there are quantum leaps and quantum jumps, or this and that, we see life as a continuity as we can see. In our daily existence. The theory of relativity and quantum physics are applied. But it is Newtonian physics that works. That does not mean that Newtonian physics holds everywhere. In our daily life continuity works. That does not mean that continuity is the ultimate truth. In our daily life, cause and effect relations work to some extent. That does not mean that cause and effect relationship is inviolable. Anyway coming back toआदावन्ते च यन्नास्ति वर्तमानेऽपि तत्तथा - that which was non existent in the beginning will be non existent after it ends, how can it exist in the middle. If you practise this thought most of your problems will go away. Life will become full of joy provided you can bear the burden of freedom. Believe me you won't be able to bear it.

What this verse 7 says is **सप्रयोजनता** - Saproyojanata - utility. Now you might have had a full belly before you went to sleep. Or maybe you had taken plenty of water before you went to sleep. And in the dream state, you may feel that you are hungry again. The food of the waking state cannot fill your belly in the dream. The fluids, the water of the waking cannot

quench your thirst in the dream. And that is why even though you might have taken enough water, well hydrated yourself , you run to the water fountain in your dream.
What we consider as continuous is not continuous. For example when you go to your bed, you leave your room in a particular state. When you wake up in the morning, that particular state continues. If you have left dirty laundry on the floor, that continues. And if you left used utensils in the sink, it continues to be there. So that creates the feeling that continuity is there. Actually there is no continuity. Because in the dream you might see, somebody has washed your utensils. So the continuity of the waking state was hopelessly contradicted in the dream and what happens in the waking stays in waking and what happens in dream stays in dream. Which means that the whole thing is completely disjointed. These are the arguments presented by Gaudapada and explained by Acharya Shankar. So the idea is absolutely clear. The conclusion is that what you perceive in the waking state is often contradicted in the dream; and what is perceived in the dream is often contradicted in the waking state. Sometimes you know they may work out, sometimes they may not. That means that since one state contradicts the other, it only means that both are unreal. The argument is that which was not in the beginning and that which will not be in the end, is not there in the middle too.
The dream state is illusory and so is the waking state. But not everyone will accept that. Rightfully so, because these objections are raised by Acharya Shankar himself. Just to explain the idea, what it means. And the objection raised is that the examples that have been used are not correct. For example you see strange objects in dreams. The example used is Chaturdanta Gajam - Elephant with four tusks. But elephants have only two tusks. You might see an elephant with four sets of teeth sticking out. You might see flying trees. You might see yourself growing wings like angels. And fantastic things you might see, things that are never there in waking state. And for all practical purposes these are non-existent. Now the term used is Asat. Asat means non-existent. Asat plays a very important role in Advaita Vedanta. In Gita also Asat comes. In Upanishads also this term comes. Asat has two meanings. One is that which cannot be perceived by the senses and the other is which actually does not exist. So if you say son of a barren woman, either you say barren woman or you say son. You will say what about medical practices in present times where you have such cases. No they are not their son. That is why you have terms like surrogacy etc. They are not your own. If you have a son, you are not barren. Finished. What you see in the dream states are actually Asat. Absolute nonexistent. Pure fantasy. And you see it very often. But in the waking state what you see is never Asat. It is not completely illusory, Just imagine the kind of arguments that these people had developed. How subtle, how profound. They made sure that no argument is left for posterity. So what you see in dreams are very often absolutely illusory. Things that can never exist. But that does not happen in the waking

state. How do you explain that? But this is also true that there is a beginning and an end. So this does not exist. This Logic we have already discussed.

This is the beauty of Vedanta and also with all the Indian spiritual philosophies, the six systems of philosophy that we have. They will never have the slightest loophole. Initially when physics was growing, people were not paying much attention. Actually real attention came towards physics after the theory of relativity was proved correct during the solar eclipse by Eddington. And then of course there was the atomic bomb, and physics never looked back. Until then Physics was not in fashion. Physicists went ahead with their idea and if contradicted they withdrew. The moment there was some anomaly from the experimental field, they immediately got down to setting their things right or withdrawing the whole thing. In fact Einstein's theory of relativity came out of that anomaly only. But nowadays, because of various reasons, very often scientists try to overlook the glaring data. They try to pass it off as an aberration. There is some kind of scientific duplicity, dishonesty. But Vedanta does not do that. None of the six systems of philosophy do that. It raises objections and demolishes it. On to Karika no 8.

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अपूर्वं स्थानिधर्मो हि यथा स्वर्गनिवासिनाम्।
तानयं प्रेक्षते गत्वा यथैवेह सुशिक्षितः ॥ Karika 8॥

The objects (perceived by the dreamer) not usually met with (in the waking state) undoubtedly owe their existence to the (peculiar) condition in which the cognizer, that is, his mind, works for the time being, as in the case of those residing in heaven. The dreamer associating himself (with dream conditions) experiences those (objects) even as the one, well instructed here (goes from one place to another and sees objects belonging to those places)

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This is another beautiful verse. The objects perceived by the dreamer are not usually seen in the waking state. So there are things that you see in the dream state which are not found in the waking state. It is not that you see only things that you have in the waking state. Actually that is why nowadays the study of dreams has become a full fledged science. People are working on it and trying to understand what exactly happens. But that is the psychological side. We are studying the philosophical side of the dream. They owe their existence to Sthanidharma - स्थानिधर्मो **-**

(English is inadequate to express Sanskrit terms used in Indian philosophy. That is why Swami Nikhilananda, who translated Upanishads and Gita often used Sanskrit terms. Swami Vivekananda also initially spoke in pure English and later used Sanskrit.)

So Gaudapada comes up with a beautiful term Sthanidharma. Actually in English it can best be translated as ”a property peculiar to that state”. Now Gaudapada says, in different Puranas we read of Gods. These Gods are Vedic Gods. And they have characteristics very specific to that state. That means you find those things only in heaven. You don't find them

on the earth. Simply because you find them only in heaven, that does not mean they do not exist. Just like those things you see in dreams, are Sthanidharma, they are specific to the dream state. Just see the argument: Subtle, profound and simple! Truth is actually always very simple. We fail to comprehend them.

Gaudapada does not discount an elephant with four teeth as an aberration. He does not come up like modern neurological and psychological researchers, telling that it is the connection and pathways of different dreams, different ideas forming dreams. Actually that is what happens. Gaudapada simply says that, because it is spiritual and philosophical, this is state specific, peculiar to that state that is Sthanidharma. So you can always see wild things, you can see fantastic things, you can see strange things, nothing strange about it. Dreams may appear counterintuitive in the waking state, just as quantum physics was initially counterintuitive to a common man. Today simply because of the exposure to that science, we have started accepting that you cannot know two variables perfectly. So dreams are very much true from the standpoint of the dream state. And the waking state is as much true from the standpoint of the waking state. That simply does not mean that the waking state is superior to the dream state.

Long ago I had read about a particular tribe in Africa who have dream breakfasts. In that, different families of the tribe assemble together for breakfast and each one recounts his or her dream and they consider it to be a beautiful thing. Perfectly normal for them. It is simply because of the onslaught of science, that too science which is extremely conditioned, that we have started thinking that the waking state is superior to the dream state. It is not so. Of course for a common man it is so. And for a common man duality is truth and because duality is truth even a child knows that me and my pen are different.

Acharya Shankar goes a step forward and says that even a cow knows that cow and the grass are two different things. This is subject object relationship. Why do you need philosophy for that? Why do you need a philosophy to prove that me and God are different? Anyone can see that. You need science to know things that can be known through direct perception, that is Pratyaksha Pramana. And you need spirituality to know things that cannot be pratyaksha. We need anumana which means logic, implications.

The mind functions for the time being as with those residing in a dreamer. What happens is that when you are talking about heaven and Gods,your mind is in heaven with the Gods. and your mind gets associated. There is nothing wrong with it and people do have visions like that; dreamer associating himself with the dream conditions. What exactly happens is your mind working and dream conditions permit these kinds of peculiarities. And so you get identified with those, perceive those objects. Even a man well instructed, goes from one place to another and sees the peculiar objects belonging to those places during the dream.

Think of when you go to a new place. When I first visited Red fort in Delhi, before that we had a chapter on Red Fort in our syllabus. So I knew that place well. Red fort is like this. Diwan e am, DIwan e khas and all those. When I went and saw Diwan e Am and Diwan e Khas, I knew that it is something like this. My mind was conditioned by the reading. Similarly during a dream the mind is conditioned with the realities of the dream or the subjective realities of the dream or peculiarities of the dream. And then as you go you experience those things, and the mind does not revolt.

However, the mind does revolt at times because those things seen are unacceptable. They are things for each one of us that we will never do. For example sometimes, during the dream, you may feel like going to the toilet and simply because you see something in the dream, you don't perform your acts of toilet in the bed. Your mind refuses to accept and you get up. Under normal conditions your mind becomes conditioned to the specifics of the dream world and it enters the dream world.

But that happens in the waking state too. For example, If you scold a kid or something wrong happens with the kid, or the kid is in some kind of physical or emotional pain he will shed tears, he will cry and fall asleep immediately because he needs to get away from the waking state. And there are people who have the same issues. If they cannot accept something from the waking state they fall asleep and they get up refreshed. Some of you might say that this never happens to me. It happens with everyone. Some people can take more stress and sometimes people can take less stress and sometimes you may feel more sleepy, sometimes less sleepy. More sleepiness is directly connected with the fact that they are not able to take the waking state any more.

When sometimes things really go wrong, extremely wrong then sleep and dreams do not work. The brain shuts itself down completely and you fall unconscious. Maybe for a second or two. Very often you may say my head is reeling. There is a beautiful description in Gita in the first chapter when Arjun tells Sri Krishna that my head is reeling. I am not able to stand, I am not able to hold my bow and arrow. Why is it happening to a strong person like Arjun? Because the reality of the waking state is unacceptable to him. He wants to go back to the dream state. And for us very often it happens if we are not able to take that. There is a fuse that blows up. When there is excessive current , excessive amperage running, the fuse blows up. And the circuit is broken. Same thing happens extreme shooting pain, and anaesthesia is the artificial way of pushing you from waking state to dream state. That is what anaesthesia is. What is a coma? It is the same thing. Unfortunately you can't come back at your will. In anaesthesia the doctor monitors the dose so that you can come back. Because the doctors know that you are not in a position to face the reality, which in this case is pain. And this pain can be emotional, it can be physical and it can be any other kind of situation. Mind just shuts. The people who have met with very serious accidents, very often

don't remember what exactly happened. Because the brain portion that recorded that is immediately covered by the brain. How this happens no one knows. But it happens. And you don't remember. In fact there are many cases where say in a massive car accident, someone came out from the right side but he or she feels that he came out from the left side. Because the whole thing shuts down and it happens with everyone. Shutting down normally or artificially. Taking drugs, taking wine , are all ways of shutting down the waking.
So don't say that and don't think that only the dream state is unreal simply because when something is unacceptable in the dream, you come out to waking. It happens to the waking state too.
What exactly happens is that there are certain parameters given by the waking state. A well instructed mind goes to their dream and finds those things. When it does not really fit, sometimes it comes back. So if you simply go by the standpoint of each state, the dream state is unreal no doubt. But waking is also unreal. If you apply the same grounds, same parameters.
After that begins the third set of arguments where the objection is about real and imagined, in the sense that in waking we know what is real and what is imagined. Gaudapada will contradict that too. So ultimately there are three sets of arguments. First from the standpoint of Nyaya, the Nyaya school of philosophy.
Then there is an argument that we see and the third comes where there are more arguments from the standpoint of real and the imagined.This will be presented in the next chapter.

20. The world is as real as a dream

We have been discussing how this world is not as real as we think or we imagine it to be. Before we continue with this talk, let us note two very important points.
One is the modern western outlook where the expression like YOLO, “you only live once” has become very popular. Nowadays you find Indian youths saying this. Translated it becomes something like Jindegi ekbarhi hoti hai - Life is only one. But that itself is not very important.
Abrahamic religions, Christianity, Islam, Judaism, also believe that this life is only once. Nothing wrong with it. Because we know how there have been great saints in every religion and how most people have lived extremely pious lives. Going by this outlook, the problem with this current expression YOLO is that since we live only once, let us draw ourselves into every kind of enjoyment. The idea shows how shallow people can be! On the one hand you think that life is non-eternal. When we say life is non-eternal in the sense that once you are dead, everything is gone. Which means life is not eternal. And yet enjoyment is eternal. If you think a bit deeply, in silence, the hollowness of the statement will become simply

evident. It is like going on a vacation. When you are on the way back, you think that you have left that place forever. Maybe you will never go there again. But the place will continue to be. Somehow this kind of analogy enters our head and we apply this thing to life too and we think that the world is real and till I am here and my existence is real. Once I am gone this will continue to be there and we will be gone. Why bother and eat, drink and be merry. At least when people go to tourist spots, they go and collect some mementos, purchase things and take some photographs and come back. Between all those things people move on. But there is no moving on for you if you believe that you only live once- YOLO. Those who have this religious outlook, coming from Abrahamic religions, believe that I have got only one life to set my life right so that I can go to eternal heaven. At least there some kind of values come in life. But people who are out to loot everything and you can see how this modern capitalism is ruining the world. People who are shouting maximum about Global warming, people who are talking about preserving the environment, they are the worst culprits. So on one hand you have people who think that my life will not continue once I am gone. So, in the limited time, enjoy and loot the world. Higher philosophies like Yog philosophy and even Samkhya philosophy, the two philosophies that come from the Vedas, believe that the world is real. You are also real. You will continue to come again and again on this. So it is not really YOLO. It is not about you only live once. But the world is real. Because Prakriti is real. Those of you, who have listened to our Raja Yog talks, would remember these two philosophies, Samkhya or Yog believe that consciousness is eternal, matter is eternal. These are like two different streams running side by side eternally, and sometimes they meet. And whenever they meet, there is creation. So, the world that we experience, the waking state is eternal. And in this waking state we have Yogic states like Suksma Jagat and Karan Jagat; the world of Gods and every subtle world that you can think of. It is real. By real we mean to say that it existed in the past and will continue to exist in the future and you will also continue to exist.

Thus so far we have three very distinct philosophies. First is the materialistic philosophy which is today's shallow thinking that people have - you only live once. Then we have Abrahamic religion according to whom you live only once but the goal is to please God with your acts. The third is you will continue to be born again and again till you attain mukti. Till then the world is real.

Now Vedanta will say, no the world is not real. Once you understand that the world is not real, so many things change for you. The first thing is this mad rush to acquire and the mad rush to hold on to is no more the main thing of life. Why do we suffer? We suffer because we have sorrow, We suffer because we have expectations. When the expectations are not fulfilled, we suffer at the mental level. And when we lose something, we suffer at the physical level. In both the cases there is some kind of loss. Loss either at the mental plane or at the

physical plane. Because the mind cannot distinguish between the two, pain is equal in both the cases. If you think that the world is extremely real and I must take as much as I can from here, naturally you will have a mad rush. You will continuously acquire more and more. Once you realise that no, it will be here, I will come in the next birth and enjoy again, the problem of the environment, the problem of global warming will be sorted out right away. Because you know that this state in which you live in the world, you will have to come back and experience those very things. It is something like you do certain cooking, you enjoy a big feast, and you leave the utensils in the sink. And you decide that it will be seen later. You go to sleep and get up in the morning. The unclean utensils will be waiting for you. You have to clean your own mess. No one else is going to clean your mess. Once you realise that it is you who will be coming back, and facing all the problems that are being created today by us your lifestyle will change. However this is one side of the story.

The second side of this story, exactly opposite of YOLO, you only live once, is - Sansar mithya hai. The world is all unreal. That is a terrible thought. You find these monks and sages particularly those who live in the upper regions of the Himalaya. And those who have not really settled much in spiritual life, they have picked up a few phrases here and there,and they go on talking about how the world is unreal - sansar mithya hai. And till the other day, even during the period when we were young, it was quite common to see such monks roaming around in villages and cities and they would ask for maybe one meal or something you give and they would sit down and talk to you and in general the idea was that the world is unreal and we who belong to that generation, we have grown up on a liberal dose of this idea that sansar mithya hai, sab moha maya hai - everything is moha and maya. But this is absolutely wrong. What Mandukya Upanishad is telling and what every other school of Vedanta , every school of vedanta is trying to tell us to have a spiritual outlook. Why are we suffering today so much? Because we don't have a spiritual outlook. I know many people, and quite friendly with them, who are working in the corporate world and the pathetic plight I see them in, is they have nothing outside their world. Outside that corporate life, just nothing. Whatever they earn, the entire amount is spent on the nuclear family they have and the entire income is spent rather wasted on them. They never take out time to study something, leave alone a subject, not even a story book. They don't take out time to meditate. They don't take out time for their personal well being. Maybe once a year they go somewhere on vacation. What exactly are they doing? Whatever they are doing is all for the physical body. This physical body is not everything. And a time comes when you become replaceable. And nowadays people get replaced by the time they are forty. Even if you have enough money, what exactly will do with that, because you are just not trained to do anything else. As a monk and as teacher it is my job to caution you that you are in no way superior to your forefathers. Your way of life is in no way different from that of your forefathers. They also

worked in the farms, they also worked in the offices and they built this society in which we are living. And they had a very clear way of life and they had a very large extended family and they used to attend to all their needs. If somebody died, if somebody was going to get married, they attended to everything and yet at the same time they continued doing this work. But most importantly they performed spiritual practices. They performed their religious acts and responsibilities. So what we are discussing here is that, before we continue with the verses, please remember if you go by the outlook that you only live once, the way the materialists believe, you will be in trouble. Similarly if you believe that this world is all moha maya mithya, all unreal, you will be in trouble. Swami Vivekananda has beautifully said this world is like a gymnasium where we come to build ourselves. Whatever you want, you want material success, there is a gymnasium here and you have to build up your muscles accordingly. And if you want spiritual mukti, freedom, you will have to build muscles here only, in this gymnasium. The gymnasium is very much true. Only when you take to the spiritual way of life, only when you are going all out for freedom, spiritual freedom, these verses become extremely important. Till then you can apply these things in your way of life so that your mad hold of this world loosens. This is like leeches holding onto the body of human beings or animals. Latching onto mad grab. Do remember that this world is not as real as you think. And if you say that this world is mithya, the world is all unreal, you make a mistake, unless you are ready for that. Sri Ramakrishna used to say very beautifully that if you forcible pull out coconut leaves here will be a mark. When they are mature, they will fall of their own. Only when you go all out for spiritual practices, where mukti becomes very important, then these things become very important. Till then these things need to be used just as spiritual sprinkling on your way of life, so that you don't have to shed tons of tears. Hindu way of life saves you from shedding tons of tears. That is where we excel. You enjoy the world. There is nothing wrong with it. Absolutely nothing wrong with it. If you are doing something for your physical body and that includes your family because they are extensions of your physical body.

But you should do something for your internal body too. You should do something for your mind too. You should do something for your soul too. When time comes maybe after some births you will realise that you need to get fully onto it. I have seen monks, I had been very close to many senior monks in my life, and now that I am pretty senior now, and I feel lucky that I interacted with them, because my own achievement, my own understanding of spiritual life is meagre. Absolutely meagre. It doesn't look good to say zero, but it's nearing zero. However, I have heard so much from these great monks. I had asked one very elderly and respected monk when do you think that a monk in the Ramakrishna Mission truly becomes spiritual. That means going out for sadhana. He straight away said, roughly after 15-20 years. That means for the first 15-20 years at least, when you are a monk in the

Ramakrishna Mission you are just cleaning up your mess, the mess that you brought in from the society. Only after you have cleaned up the mess, do you go all out for Sadhana. This is something like building a palace in a forest. You need to clean the forest first, you need to cut down the trees, you need to remove the roots and clean the undergrowths. And only then you become ready to lay the foundation. Spiritual life is not that easy. People come and say we want to know what exactly is your way of practising. Nowadays these things have become very popular. Young people who have lived the corporate life and somewhere they are disillusioned and they want to have a quick grab at spirituality. That is why you find that some of these teachers have become so popular. But you cannot grab that so easily. The day you decide to go for spiritual life, it will take at least 15-20 years just to clean up the mess. Then if you are lucky, you can start your spiritual life. And people who are living in the world, enjoying the world and they need to continue with some kind of spiritual practice just for sanity. You need to save yourself from shedding tears. No amount of books on positivity, no amount of counselling can save you from this. Only spiritual practices can save you. And these spiritual practices panch mahayajna, we have talked many times in the corporate world, also you can practise these things. You need to meditate, you need to study books of your subject, the area in which you are working. You need to take care of others. You need to identify with others. If you don't do all these, believe me that God has an abundant amount of tears to supply to your tear ducts. While living a life of complete materialism will lead to pain on one hand, thinking the world to complete mithya, illusory is also wrong, unless one is prepared for that.

Swami Vivekananda when he went to the west, what he was talking about, can be summed up in two simple words. Diluted materialism. Materialism is very important. But it needs to be diluted. So neither YOLO nor the world is mithya concept is correct. It is in between. Have controlled exposure to materialism. Which means enjoy but have a spiritual outlook. So that when the time comes, you can go all out to spirituality. Because ultimately you will have to. You are an Indian. You stand for spirituality. Spirituality is your birthright. And you have to be the teachers of spirituality.You alone, India alone can sprinkle the soothing waters of spirituality on this world, burning with the fire of materialism. Just imagine . just look around anywhere ,materialism is burning even us monks. We can't live without our phones. We can't live without our computers. And you find the service providers are trying to cheat you at every step. Anyway that is a separate issue. What we are discussing are two extremes of YOLO and other extreme of this world is illusion. So, we start with verse no 9 and 10

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स्वप्नवृत्तावपि त्वन्तश्चेतसा कल्पितं त्वसत्।
बहिश्चेतोगृहीतं सदृष्टं वैश्यमेतयोः ॥ Karika 9॥
जाग्रद्योत्तावपि त्वन्तश्चेतसा कल्पितं त्वसत्।

बहिश्चेतो गृहीतं सद्युक्तं वैतथ्यमेतयोः ॥ Karika 10॥

In dream, also, what is imagined within by the mind is illusory and what is cognized outside (by the mind) appears to be real. But (in truth) both these are known to be unreal.
Similarly, in the waking state, also, what is imagined within by the mind is illusory; and what is experienced outside (by the mind) appears to be real. But in fact both should be rationally held to be unreal.

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We have been discussing how we consider this world to be real.

First is the reality of the materialists according to whom you only live once and go for unbridled materialism. Then there is reality based on Abrahamic religions who also say this is one life and it is to be utilised for higher growth. And then there is a third set of reality coming from Samkhya and Yog philosophies, and they say that consciousness is real and matter too is real.The fourth one is taken up by Vedanta and there is the fifth which is taken up by the Buddhists according to whom everything is mithya. So we will go for that also.

Gaudapada who has written the Mandukya Karika, earlier talked about the similarity between waking and the dream. We have this instinctive understanding that the world, the external that we perceive is more real and definitely real compared to the dream, the thought world. So compared to what we see during hallucinations, compared to what we imagine and compared to what we dream, the world appears much more real. Well that is true with all of us.

Schopenhauer the great philosopher was pretty stocky and well built. And he used to eat a lot. And he had studied Indian philosophy and he was extremely impressed by the Indian outlook. He started talking about appearance , unreality of the world, in his own typical German way. But he loved food and made sure that he had good food. And while eating he would always say that although I keep on talking about everything being unreal, food does not appear unreal to me.

This is very Interesting because this isn't how the world goes, If it is unreal everything is unreal. So we normally think that in imagination, hallucinations are the worst. Dreams are the next. Imagination is a little higher and the external world is the highest. Well that is the order I personally think. Now Gaudapada says that you think that the waking state is superior to the dream state. But they are all the same. The reasons why you consider waking to be superior to the dream, Gaudapada demolishes.

The first point of demolition is that in both cases, perception is common. This we discussed earlier. Perception is common. You have a very clear idea that you're perceiving the waking state. Now this comes from logicians. They have a very clear methodology of argument as described in the earlier chapters. There we have discussed it in detail.

The second point is that every experience has a beginning and an end. This also we discussed in the earlier.

Here Gaudapada now attacks the concept of real and imagination in verse 9 and 10. He says, In dreams, what is imagined within the mind, is illusory and what is cognized outside by the mind is believed to be real. But truly both are known to be unreal.

And it says that in the waking state what is imagined within by the mind is illusory and what is cognized outside by the mind is real. But both should be held as unreal on rational grounds. Many of you must have had this experience that during your dream you realise that you are dreaming. You must have realised that Oh! This is a dream. But why? Because if you look back, you will realise that you experienced certain things within your mind. And Oh! I am just thinking. And there are certain other things that you are believing as if you are seeing outside during dreams. But when you see things from the standpoint of the waking you realise that whether you were imagining within your mind in dream or you seeing things with your senses within dream both are illusory. If that be the case then how come the world that we are experiencing outside and the world that we imagine within are different. Well the argument and the basis of argument is extremely simple. The earlier two verses of Gaudapada have made it abundantly clear that fundamentally the waking state and dream state are not different. Everything is common among states. As far as dreams are concerned, during dreams whatever you perceive within your mind you realise to be false in the dream itself. And things that you seem to perceive you believe them to be true. Yet when you wake up you realise that both are false. So the idea is that in dreams you also realise that certain things are false. What are those things that are false? Things that you seem to imagine. As related to things you seem to perceive in dreams.

Just imagine to what great heights, saints like Gaudapada, who was the Guru of the Guru of Shankaracharya, took the analysis and study of dreams! Just go and check what the western world was doing then, that is 3rd century AD. We don't mean to demean them, but how much they have studied dreams during that period is a question.

And so comes the conclusion. Gaudapada openly challenges the idea that the waking state is superior to the dream state, as we normally think. In what way the waking state is real and dream is not. If a dream is unreal then waking too is unreal. Because everything is similar about them. And if waking is real then dream is also real. Well he goes by very simple logic. Absolutely simple argument. And he puts forward three different arguments.

We have grown up with the understanding that the waking state is real and the dream state is false. So, just one blow is not enough. This was the fourth point according to which , you are real but the world is unreal.

And then comes the fifth. We discussed the first one as YOLO. the materialists. Second, the Abrahamic religions. Third Samkhya and Yog. according to which both are real. And then comes Vedanta according to which you are real but the world is unreal. And then comes the fifth. According to Buddhists everything is unreal. Very often scholars confuse these two -

Vedanta and Buddhism. And nowadays this concept of neo-Vedanta etc has added to the confusion. And confusion is much more intense. And we move to Karika 11.

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उभयोरपि वैतथ्यं भेदानां स्थानयोर्यदि ।

क एतान्बुध्यते भेदान् को वै तेषां विकल्पकः ॥ Karika 11॥

If the objects cognized in both the conditions (of dream and of waking) are illusory, who cognizes all these (illusory objects) and who again imagines them?

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Three arguments were used. Perception is the common ailment. Number 2, both have a beginning and an end. And the third is that both distinguish between the real and the imaginary. There is no difference. So the question raised is who imagines all these? Who imagines? Because as the verse no 10 says, **जाग्रद्योत्तावपि त्वन्तश्चेतसा कल्पितं त्वसत्** - In the waking state certain things are being imagined inside and certain other things are being imagined outside. So basically the external world that you are seeing, what is that? It is also imagination. Certain imaginations are within and certain imaginations are outside. As in the case of dream certain imaginations are within and certain imaginations are outside. But for dreams, we know that I am imagining. But in the case of the waking state, who is imagining ? Because I can very well feel that this pen is solid, this pen is true. So there must be someone who is imagining this to be true so the discussion now continues from here. Actually, the point of perception is different. The very thought that the external world is our imagination, outside of me, is terrifying. This is where the other end of mithya makes mistakes. When most sadhus talk about the world being an illusion, this is where they make mistakes. It is not an illusion. It is my mind. This illusion is somewhere else, not here. But the bottom line remains, whether you imagine inside or imagine outside, ultimately it is imagination. So verse no 11 is a simple question. Who is imagining it? Verse no 12 answers that it is the Atman who imagines.When we had started the first chapter and we had been discussing things like the three states and the fourth, which was Turiya, Atman. So whether it is a Jagrata or it is Swapna or Susupti, these are all thoughts. Thoughts and thoughts. Nothing else.

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कल्पयत्यात्मनाऽऽत्मानमात्मा देवः स्वमायया।

स एव बुध्यते भेदानिति वेदान्तनिश्चयः ॥ Karika 12॥

Atman, the self-luminous, through the power of his own Maya, imagines in himself by himself (all the objects that the subject experiences within or without). He alone is cognizer of the objects (so created). That is the decision of Vedanta

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Vedanta has sandhi at this point of verse no 12, cuts away from every other system of philosophy. It is no more a materialistic philosophy. It has no similarity with Abrahamic

religions. It has no relation with Samkhya or Yog. And it does not have any relation with Boudhha. It says that it is the self-luminous Atman, **देवः** - Devah means in the sense illumination, through the power of its own Maya, It is own power, own Maya. It is the inherent power, Imagines in itself, by itself, all the objects that this subject experiences within and without. The pure Atma, absolutely pure Atman, imagines. Atman in itself, by itself does not require a substratum. For example I have this pen and I go on imagining things about this pen, so there's this pen ,this becomes the substratum and then you can go on making imaginations. But not so with Atman. Atman imagines and substratum of that imagination is Atman itself. Well these things are coming from the mouths of great sages and we have no grounds to question them. They have tried to put things as traditionally as possible.

Now you can say that, there is nothing, absolutely nothing, no substratum, but we know one thing that when we are imagining things, whether that imagination is outside or that imagination is inside, there is some continuity, some kind of memory. There is some kind of story building there, whether there is some stratum or not. And the question comes in verse no 11. If you say no one then you become a Buddhist but how are Buddhists wrong? Buddhists do not accept Atman. Now one who says there is no Atman, who is imagining? Gaudapada says one who refutes Atman, says there is no Atman, takes the position of being the Atman.This argument is not really very subtle and at the same time not very gross. If you just try to understand you will grasp it instantly.

Recently someone questioned that if everything is Mithya, everything is Jnana, then this idea of birth and death that is rebirth , that is also mithya. That means there is no rebirth and the concept of rebirth in Hinduism is false.This is the kind of argument that Sufists use. My answer was simple. Since everything is mithya, the person who is speaking, his words are also mithya. Should I accept those words? Indeed it is a fact that the very idea of bondage and ideas of mukti, freedom, are all false. Even the idea of mukti belongs to Ajnana. Swami Vivekananda very clearly says this and Shankaracharya also says this. It is not that Shankaracharya says something and Swami Vivekananda says something else. Only foolish people talk like this. Somebody has now come up with this one of those brain waves, Vijnana Vad, Vijnan Vedanta. I don't read all this. These are just trash. Shankarachrya will say something and Sri Ramakrishna will say something is never possible. Emphasis may be different depending on the needs of the society and the time. But emphasis will be different and it has to be different. Then why study the scriptures? Why do Jap Dhyan? Why do Tapasya? Because indeed these belong to the realm of ignorance. But these things help you to go beyond ignorance. For a person, who is already free, for example Sri Ramakrishna, he was beyond all these. But initially he had to do all that. And people who are extremely absorbed in this world having animal-like existence, they also don't need it. It is the

middlings, persons like us who need scriptures. Persons like us need teachers. Persons like us who need meditation. And persons like us who need prayer. You only have to look at this social media, and get some feel of how things are going on and around. And that is why earlier higher scriptures were reserved for chosen few. Because ordinary minds will make a mess of it. So when the question is raised, who imagines, if you say no one, then you become a Buddhist. And Vedanta avoids that and comes to Atman. And how it avoids that, How it contradicts that? By saying one who contradicts the existence of Atman, takes up the position of Atman. I don't know if you find this argument slightly difficult. It is not. Rather quite simple. Because you are saying that I am telling you that this is wrong, in that sense of Atman, that sense of “I”ness has already come. So “I” ness will always be there, Atman will always be there. When you are trying to contradict Atman, the existence of Atman, as Buddhists do, Atman will have to be the basis of contradiction. And because that is the basis, it will have to be there. And beyond that you cannot go because in logic, while arguing, this is considered to be a bad form of logic, where you go on asking questions, what is after this and what is after this.

Gargi had asked this question to Yajnavalka and Yajnavalka humorously replied that if you go on asking further, without understanding what you are asking, your head will fall in a thousand pieces, Because Gargi was simply arguing for the sake of arguing. When you ask some questions, you should have a very clear understanding of what you are asking. See I was talking to a friend and telling those who do not know Physics,first thing they ask is could you please explain to me what is theory of relativity. Those who do not understand physics, they will say could you please explain what quantum Physics is? They don't understand what is Kinetic energy and what is potential energy , they don't understand what is 1/2mv^2, but they want to understand the theory of relativity. Similarly people who know nothing about Yam, Niyam , ashana , dharana, dhyana, they want to know about Atmajnan. They want to know about Samadhi. They want to know about Atman. See the moment you find that somebody has asked a question, which is well beyond that person, It only means that he is not into that subject. If you are in a subject, you will ask questions that are troubling you directly. For example, here our pro-chancellor Shrimad Swami Atmapryanandaji and we have other monastics, wonderful monks. I do have discussions with them. And very often I ask them questions that are troubling me. Questions that are not really finding proper solutions, Solutions are there but it is not satisfactory to me. We discuss. We don't discuss Atman and Mukti. If people go on asking what after that, it only means that you do not have any understanding of the subject. People who argue like that, don't have any understanding of the subject. What can be said?

Only today somebody wrote on youtube that you don't understand anything of Raja Yog and named some speakers. He understands. What should I say? I follow the texts. I am not a

popular speaker. And his only criteria of my being wrong is that the gentleman he mentioned is a popular speaker. Well if popularity is the ultimate test of correctness, then film stars will be more correct in spiritual matters than ordinary people like us, who have no following. The level of ignorance is abysmal. Ignorance always breeds arrogance. We can smell the moment you see arrogance, you can smell the ignorance. When ignorance cooks within, the smell of arrogance keeps on spreading all around. So now this one very interesting comment here, in Verse no 12, Acharya Shankar uses the word Vainashika. Shankaracharya was such a great intellect, he could demolish any system of thought which was not Vedantic. He was great and the term he uses for the Buddhists is Vainashik. Gautam Buddha was a great preacher, no doubt about it. But as far as their philosophy is concerned, it is so skewed, that every Vedanti takes a potshot at them. And Buddhism was completely thrown out of India simply because they lacked terribly in their philosophy. Then because of political reasons, some politicians brought currency to Buddhism. But as far as philosophy is concerned, they continue to be weak and vague. And anyone who talks about Buddhism, we believe that the person is shallow. Of course for those who are Buddhists it is a different thing. For them it is the way of life. I am talking about the non-buddhists talking about Buddhism. It simply means that the fellow does not have an understanding of Vedanta. If you understand Vedanta, you realise that Buddhism stands nowhere. Who are Buddhists stands no chance, absolutely no chance.

So we have been discussing the external world & inner world. We imagine certain things within, we imagine certain things outside. What we imagine outside is the external world. What we imagine within we foolishly call imagination, without realising that there is no difference between internal imagination and external imagination. And this is asserted in verse no 13.

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विकरोत्यपरान्भावानन्तश्चित्ते व्यवस्थितान् ।।
नियंताश्च बहिश्चित्त एवं कल्पयते प्रभु:॥ Karika 13॥

The Lord (Atman), with his mind turned outward, variously imagines the diverse objects (such as sounds etc), which are already in his mind (in the form of Vasanas or Sankalpas or desires). The Atman again (with his mind turned within), imagines in his mind various (objects of) ideas.

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When the Lord's, the Atman's, mind is turned outward, imagines in diverse forms, various objects, either permanent such as the earth or impermanent such as lightning, which are already in his mind in the form of Vasanas or desires. Again when he turns his mind within and imagines various ideas. Atman or Ishwar, call anything, when he turns his imagination outside he sees different kinds of things. Permanent like earth, that will be discussed in the next sutra where the expression comes from Chittakal and Vikal. The words for what you

imagine is Chittakala and it lasts only in your mind and Vikal that exists in the minds of others too and then it will be shown how both are equally imaginary.
So it says that Lord , Atman or God, he already has those Vasanas, those thoughts there.When he imagines within, here this Lord is the Lord who is within and when he turns it within it appears to us as thoughts and we take those things outside, it appears as objects. Objects again have different kinds of reality. Some appear to be permanent like earth and some appear for very short duration.
Nowadays personally, I am extremely fascinated by my own dreams. And I love it. I love watching my dreams because such beautiful stories are woven during the dream, sometimes something does not fit, suddenly you say oh my god it is a dream. And in the dream you are thinking like that. Just like that, in this world, something doesn't fit, you often say that it is all your imagination.
However it says that the Supreme Lord, pure consciousness, has every idea.The term used is Vasana. Sometimes it is Bahischitta, when the mind becomes externalised and then sees these objects. And then it becomes internalised, Antahschitta, it sees various ideas and thoughts. Sanskrit words are so wonderful, Bahischitta antahschitta. When Atman turns inward and we imagine things. Imagine all these imaginations that we have. So we have this world of imagination within and we have the world of external imagination. Fundamentally they are not different, they are one and the same. This is the standpoint of Vedanta.

21. You are what your knowledge is

We had some discussion on how real is real and we saw that as far as the waking state is concerned, the external world is concerned, we pay too much attention to it. We give too much importance to it. And we think that the external world is more real than the imaginary world, the world of imagination, particularly the dream world. And we have wonderful expressions in every language where if you have to mock somebody we use words like pipedream and dreamworld etc. But not only from the highest standpoint of Vedanta, but from the highest standpoint as such, is it that the external world is more real than the internal world? Let us have a look at it because the purpose of Vedanta is to present truth the way it is. It just does not try to cover up things. It does not try to polish things.
So in the earlier verses, we discussed space and causation. When you think of the world of mind, you think of simply the world as we understand, three things are extremely important in this world. Time, space and causation. And this is Maya. Time space causation, there is space as Physics will tell and Physics says and our own experience says that there is causation there are events. And with our common sense and also physics has given us a lot of knowledge about time. In every scripture, in every society and in every culture you will find

that lot of emphasis being given to time. Now let us see how Mandukya Karika looks at the dream state or the internal world compared to the waking state or the external world. We normally say the waking state as reality. What does Mandukya Karika say?

One important thing that we find is that there is a major difference in the factor of time. Looking from the standpoint of Mandukya Karika, it was explained how the idea of space that we have in the waking state,the same idea of space is in the dream state too. And what we see in dream is peculiar to that state. Earlier we saw that, just as heaven, as described in the scriptures, has certain specific peculiarities, in the same way the dream state also has certain peculiarities, specific to the state.

So to say that the external world is more real, more important than the dream state is not right. Similar is the causation. We find how a person travels in space and experiences certain things during the dream state. These things have been discussed and we don't want to go into it once again. Time factor remains. Because intuitively we understand that whatever happens within our mind and what happens in the external world, they have a time lapse. This we will discuss in detail. But what exactly is time? As we mentioned in the beginning, when we talk of time in Physics, we compare one set of events with another set of events. For example you are making tea, and it takes say five minutes. How to measure that five minutes? While the tea is being made, another event is taking place, which is the movement of the hands of the clock. We measure this five minutes with respect to the movement of the clock hands. And if it is at a larger scale then well there is the motion of the planets and stars and through that we compare things. At the smaller scale, we use the clock. So there is an event involved where both the hands of the clock are moving and you are also performing some act. You compare the time lapse of your working with that of movement of the clock and things can be calculated very easily. But suppose there was no clock, then? It is a very interesting situation. Think of a situation when you have to go and meet someone, whom you really love. Someone who you have given time to meet. Someone who is waiting for you. And both of you are extremely eager.Think of some member of the family returning from where after a long gap, mother, parents, family. They are trying to reach the station and they know that the train will come at such and such time. Now when you are hurrying, you feel that time has shortened and the person who is waiting, every few seconds he looks at the watch and says oh you are thinking maybe five minutes have passed, but find that barely 30 seconds have passed; for him as if time has stretched. And the person who is hurrying through is the reverse. This is like an examination, the student who is writing the examination, for him the time passes as if faster, while for the invigilator, it seems as if the time is not passing, has slowed down. When you are intensely preoccupied, working on some project, you lose sense of time. This is a very common expression. You lose sense of time. So there are moments when you lose sense of time.

And there are moments when you are extremely aware of time. So losing sense of time and being aware of time, has something to do directly with your mind. And when we look at the clock or the watch against which we might be comparing, we find that time had slowed down or for somebody time was moving faster. It has nothing to do with what Einstein had been talking about in the theory of relativity. It is a purely subjective perception. So ultimately we find that when we become more aware of time, its eminence increases and we are not aware of time, its eminence decreases. Which means when we are continuously looking at the clock, that means your mind is aware of the flow of time. And because your mind is aware of the flow of time, it becomes extremely eminent. Its importance increases. Because its importance increases if he lags in his work, the awareness of time increases. And when you are not aware of something, then just the reverse happens. It loses importance for you. It loses eminence for you. And this is what happens in the case of time. And this awareness, eminence. These two things are deeply connected with our own existence.

Now whenever we want to bring some amount of objectivity we keep some kind of clock, some kind of measure of time. So, this external element regulates , regulates in the sense that we compare our sense of time, subjective time with the external. And we consider the external time to be more real than the internal time. So who is giving importance to the external time? It is me who is giving importance to the external time. Think of a Yogi, who has been meditating for hundreds of years. For them, external time has no meaning. Actually we are giving importance to the external time. So, very clearly there are two different types of time, subjective and objective.

So is there any value of subjective time? Science will not agree to this concept of subjective time and objective time. To them it is always objective.

But Vedanta very clearly distinguishes subjective time and objective time. I gave the example as an introduction. It is very important. Because there is subjective time and there is objective time, because as we shall see, subjective reality and objective reality depend entirely on your understanding of time. If there is subjective time, we say that it is less real, it is imagination, it is a dream. And when there is an objective reality as we say it is real. Mandukya Karika will demolish even that concept. It is an amazing work. It is not really that complicated, and try to make a sense out of it, you will find that it is extremely simple and logical.

So it says, time is of two types. The expression used by them is, imagine it is such an old book and it is not Gaudapada who came up with this idea, this idea was already there. He says Chittakalik the time, which is limited and confined within the mind. This is subjective. They don't use the term subjective. They have this very clear technical term Chittakalik. Chitta means mind. And the time or event which is outside is termed - In two moments, Dwaikalik. Single moment is when it is within the mind, and two moments is when it is

outside. It is not really two moments, it is about cognition basically. And they say that when you perceive something, cognize something within your mind, the time that is lapsing can be confirmed or can be inferred only by your mind. So this Chittakalik. The event is totally confined within the mind and hence time is totally confined within the mind.
But there are events that take place outside. For example you and your friend went to a mechanic's shop to repair your car. And later on somebody asks you how long your friend was with you. And you say till the car getting repaired. Now there are two different events. One is the car getting repaired and the other is your friend waiting. How long was your friend there? Till the car was getting repaired. How long did it take the car to be repaired? Till your friend was there. So there are two things. You can say there could be multiple. That does not matter. Two is as good as three or four or as many. That makes no difference. Ultimately it is about being one which is within the mind, and being two which is outside. The example that Vedanta uses is about milking. How long was the person there? Till the cow was getting milked. How long did the cow milk? till that person was there. So these are two different episodes, two different events and these are being compared with each other to create a sense of duality, of two. So with this idea clear, what is subjective time and what is objective time, we now try to look at the reality. We consider something to be more real if it has a witness. Those of you who are familiar with mistry stories, murder stories, detective stories know that and in a legal drama you know that police always look for a witness. If you go to the court, the Judge will ask for a witness. A lot depends on the witness. And when lawyers argue they try to crack the defence put up by the witness. So ultimately the external reality is all about witness. How long was the car getting repaired? Till your friend was there. How long was your friend there? Till the car was getting repaired. So basically one is the witness of the other. In Chittakalik the time is subjective, there is no witness. When they are using the term, Chittakalik Dwaikalik, what they mean to say is that there is no witness. Nothing more. Chittakalik, Dwaikalik- in very simple language it is about witness. In the external world we feel that there is a witness. And under normal conditions we think that in the case of imagination and in the case of dreams, there is no witness. So it is Chittaklaik, an event which is totally confined within the mind. That is the duration of the event is confined within the mind. But when it comes to external objects, the duration of the event is separated by two distinct events.

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चित्तकाला हि येऽन्तस्तु द्वैकालाश्च ये बहिः ॥

कल्पिता एव ते सर्व विशेषो नान्यहेतुकः ॥ Karika 14॥

Those that are cognized within only as long as the thoughts of them lasts, as well as those that are perceived by the senses and that conform to two points of time, are all mere imaginations. There is no other ground for differentiating one from the other.

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Very interesting sloka. It says that when we cognize something internally it is only as long as the thought persists. That is why you will see that sometimes a thought comes to your mind when you are thinking. In dreaming also the same thing happens. A thought appears and the event is there only till the thought is there. That means there is no witness as such. And those that are perceived outside, and relate to two points in time. Two points in time does not mean two different points. Essentially it means two different events taking place and they relate with each other. The example that I gave you of the car getting repaired and your friend waiting there. So are all mere objects of imaginations? Now what Gaudapada says **कल्पिता एव ते सर्व** - whether the events be Chittakalik or events be Dwaikalik, they are all imagined. How real is real? The way we understand real is as imaginary as the real and imaginary is as real as the real. Real and imagined there is no essential difference. Because what it says is that in dream state also one has two types of perception. This perception that I have been doing something, someone else is watching this happen in dream also. The only thing is we do not have the patience, we do not have the time to causitate over the dreams. There is an African tribe, I read it long ago, who have dream breakfasts. The family when they meet for breakfast, they all talk about the dreams they had and they say that well dream state is as good as the waking state. Once I was talking to one of our very learned monks, actually I am extremely curious about dreams because it is the gateway to many more things. It is a gateway to madness, it is a gateway to schizophrenia and it is also a gateway to deeper understanding of Vedanta. So I asked this wise monk, how he looks at dream? And he said that it is a learning experience. I was startled by the answer. Dream as a learning experience. He said that he gets a lot of insights through dreams. He is a thinking monk. Yes, if you think of Kekule's dream and many other persons, I personally , lots of my writings come through certain insights that I got during dreams. So dreams are best to be perceived as a learning experience and nothing less than that. What Gaudapada says is as far as dreams are concerned and if you consider from the standpoint of time, or events, you think that an event took place till the time there was thought, so the subject and object become one. And in the case of the external world as if they are two. No nothing like that. They are all the same. Because in dreams also you come across certain dreams where there are witnesses. In the rush of things we seem to think that it is not so. But if you start analysing the dreams, you will see that in dreams also Dwaikalik , perceiving at two different points of time i.e., Dwaikalik I is there. So you cannot say that there is any distinction between the external world and the dream world.

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अव्यक्ता एव येऽन्तस्तु स्फुटा एव च ये बहिः।
कल्पिता एव ते सर्वे विशेषस्त्विन्द्रियान्तरे ॥ Karika15॥

Those that exist within the mind (as mere subjective imaginations) and are known as the unmanifested as well as those that exist without in a manifested form (as perceived objects) - all are imaginations, the difference lying only in the sense-organs (by means of which latter are cognized)
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So naturally the question comes that even if we agree that these are two same, why is it that we feel that the external world is more real than the inner world. There is a very interesting sloka that Gaudapada gives us. Says, those events and objects that exist within the mind as subjective ideas and are known as unmanifested, it is all inside unmanifested and those that are perceived in the external world in a manifested form. When I think of an object in my mind, it is unmanifested. When I see the object in the external world it is manifested. Says both are mere objects of imagination. The external world is actually an object of imagination. Their difference lies only in the difference of the organs by means of which they are perceived. How you perceive them विशेषस्त्विन्द्रियान्तरे - The organs of perception that make them appear different.

Here we need to understand a very simple faculty of the mind which is rarely discussed. Our education system is such and even the training system is such that we don't dive deep. As far as Hindu families are concerned, when we were young and growing up in orthodox Hindu family, we had actually learnt lots of things which were extremely meaningful and extremely philosophical. And now when I study these scriptures and try to explain them, I realise how these expressions have come to me and come to us we kids, spontaneously. There was nothing very special about this. If you go and talk about these things in villages where people have lived with this culture, it is so obvious that they know all this. It is very surprising and interesting that in the rush things we have been losing all these.

If you try to understand what is mind, what is the inner world and what is the external world, as we discussed with our idea of time, we came to know of awareness and eminence and this is the characteristic of the mind. Those of you, who have listened to our Raja Yog talks, remember that ChittaVritti is like ripples in the mind. Mind is like a calm ocean, the mind is like a calm lake. And there are ripples. One set ripples, come from disturbance from the outside, four sets come from inside. So only one fifth of the stimuli, of all the stimuli come from outside. Four stimuli will come from outside - Pramana, Vipariya, Vikalpa, Nidra, Smriti, i.e., through memories, through dreams, through imaginations, through delusion four out five inputs to mind come from within. Only one came from outside. And we consider this external world to be so important! And religion also gives a lot of importance to it. If the inner world is important, then why not the external world as well. It is something very obvious. Now when that input comes, when the stimulus comes, the mind really does not distinguish between external and internal. What the mind does is because of its training and that training has to be extremely specific. That training of my mind is totally different from your training of mind, depending on how you have been trained. That is what is the background, what is the

environment you grew up in and what kind of books you have studied. What is your treasure of knowledge, what kind of knowledge you carry in your head, all these things shape your personality, all these things shape your shraddha, shraddha is the right term. And because of that what happens whenever you come across an external object your behaviour and reaction depend upon that training. If you come across a person with physical deformity, some people, the onlookers might address that person calling by the deformity (lame or blind etc.) However, those close to that person will never do so. They will address him lovingly. Now why is it happening that the known people behave in one way and those who are indifferent behave differently. It is their mind that gives them some add-ons, Upadhi. And this is true for all of us whenever we observe something, whenever we think something, whenever we dream something, this storehouse of our mind, always supplies, without any exception, some add-ons. And it is through those add-ons we perceive this world. When we say that we try to be objective. We can never be objective, no person can ever be objective. Please mark my words. No one in this world., no one in the universe, not even gods, not the angels , no one can ever be objective in this world. It is just not possible. Because anyone who has the mind will have prejudices, good or bad. And those prejudices will always act as add-ons to the data coming to the mind, which could be internal or external. Take the case of a sweet dish, rasgulla. Or a chocolate which is popular all over the world. A kid looks at the chocolate and he goes happy. But a diabetic person, an overweight person will not like that. Potato chips, kids love potato chips.but those suffering from being overweight will say I don't want that. For a diabetic sweet is poison and so he will say don't bring that poison. What is objectivity and reality? Rasgulla is Rasgulla. Then why is the kid becoming so excited, and a diseased person says it is poison. Actually this applies to everything that we experience and that experience might be internal and that experience may be external. It makes no difference Exactly just like that when we experience something which is coming from delusion, Imagination, memory or dream we apply those add-ons, and also when things come from outside, the add-ons are applied. Certain things, coming through certain organs when it is coming from the external organs, we just say that it is of more importance. When it is coming from the internal organs we say that it is less true. The technical term for this storehouse is Chitta, mind, mind stuff. Swami Vivekanada uses the term mind stuff. So chitta is the place for memory and memory plays a very important role in Mandukya Karika. So what the mind does is just to give the add-ons, Chittakalik. Same with time , present past and future, mind cannot distinguish a memory with something that is happening and an imagination. Mind cannot. It just applies certain add-ons. And that add-on comes through training. For a kid, for a young baby, the dream and the real are the same. Sometimes for them dreams are more real than waking. And as we grow we train our mind in such a way that the dream is less real. For example, you might know kids who are in the habit of

bedwetting. They wet their bed in dreams. They would imagine that they are in front of a urinal or something and passing their urine. For them it is all real and the body acts in a real manner. Not only with them, hundreds of things as we mentioned that these real things have a certain effect on the dream. Dream also has a certain effect on the body; bedwetting is an example of that. So you cannot say that this is more real and that is less real. Actually what happens is that the mind, depending on the training it has received, applies add-ons. So people who have studied science, for them the knowledge bank that they have, supplies certain add-ons and they see this moon and star in a certain way and people who did not have that kind of education perceive those things with entirely religious setup. There is a beautiful story which I read in Harari's famous book Sapiens. Apollo 11 astronauts were ready to go to the moon, the training was held at a place where there were some Red Indians. They wanted to meet those astronauts and told them that they consider the Moon as their God. They requested the Astronauts to carry a message to their ancestors who they believed stayed on the Moon. Red Indians believe that when one dies they go to the moon. They gave the astronauts a note in their own language and Astronauts memorosed it. The message was translated and it said "Don't believe these people who have come to the Moon, Whatever they may say.This is all about land grabbing in the name of scientific experiment.They just want to grab your land. Because Red Indians have suffered so much in the hands of the Americans and it is a fact that the present day Americans, who teach lots of things to the world, grabbed all the land of the Red Indians. And now they live in reserved areas. They were worried that these people would go to the moon and grab the land of the moon for their own ulterior motive, in the name of scientific observation etc. Now you see, Astronauts who were going, had a very clear add-on of science and technology. Their purpose had a very clear add-on. And the Red Indians who did not have this kind of training were seeing things from their religious prism and their add-on was from the aspect of religion. And so they wanted to warn their ancestors that they would actually grab their land on the Moon. So this is what Gaudaopada says- **कल्पिता एव ते सर्वे विशेषस्त्विन्द्रियान्तरे**. This difference that we think of, when we think of waking as being more real, is all because the organs involved are different. And because organs involved are different, we perceive things differently. Now later they will explain how this entire process takes place. Gaudapada was an extremely logical person and if he had not been logical, Shankaracharya, the most rational and logical person, would have never written a commentary on his work. We have only two such persons, Swami Vivekananda and Shankaracharya, who went by hard core reasoning. You cannot rely on people who write these in poetry and they are more interested in Chhanda, and different kinds of expression, But both Swami Vivekananda and Shankaracharya used prose. And prose is much more rational and their approach is

extremely rational. Whatever they are explaining, Acharya Shankar says beautifully that it is the senses through which some idea is coming that we consider something to be more real, something to be less real. As far as the thought itself is concerned, because for mind everything is a Chitta Vritti, for the mind everything is disturbance. Just imagine a lake and you throw a stone from outside and there are ripples and a big fish moves and there will be ripples. To the surface of the lake, both are ripples, whether coming from inside or outside. Similarly as far as the mind is concerned, It will see everything as a disturbance. Think of a weighing scale and whether you put gold on it or put iron on it, it will just show the weight. Exactly like the surface of the lake , it doesn't care whether the disturbance is from outside or inside. Mind is like that.

Now over the period, the character that we have acquired and Mandukya will say, the memory we have, the store house of the memory that we have just jumps from within and puts an add-on and then it is declared as something. Very hard to believe but, nevertheless this is the truth. This is how the mind works and this is how it perceives things. We truly make too big of thinking external and make too big of science, without realising that the external is just as real as the imagined. There is no speciality about it. Then science is just a method of knowledge, nothing more than that, and in no way it is superior to religion. Absolutely no way. Anyone who says being scientific, I understand that the person has to be extremely shallow. He doesn't understand. If you are talking about rationality, that means A=B and B=C and so A = C, this is in a particular set, this has to be true, well Hindu religion goes strictly by that principle. It doesn't go by belief. Other religions might be going by belief. Not Hindu religion. Then comes the bomb shell. Karika 16

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जीवं कल्पयते पूर्वं ततो भावान्पृथग्विधान।
बाह्यानाध्यात्मिकांश्चैव यथाविद्यास्तथास्मृतिः ॥ Karika 16॥

First of all, is imagined the Jiva (the embodied being) and then are imagined the various entities, objective and subjective, that are perceived. As is (one's) knowledge so is (one's) memory of it.

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First of all the Jiva is imagined, the embodied individual, and then are imagined the various entities that make this world. Both external that is sound , sight etc and internal that work within, Prana, Indriya etc that are perceived to exist. And as is one's knowledge so is one's memory. Just remember - यथाविद्यास्तथास्मृतिः - as your knowledge so becomes your memory. From the standpoint of psychology, from the standpoint of Yog Psychology, as is your knowledge so is your memory. Now Smriti is a very interesting term. It is not just memory. Smriti is much more than that. It is all the knowledge that you acquire and the knowledge that you have applied because when you apply some knowledge you become a master of it. Knowledge, acquired knowledge applied. In Vedanta Smriti plays a very important role. Now we are loosely translating smriti as memory. But smriti is just

not memory. It is much more than that. Smriti is a storehouse of all your memories. It is also the faculty to apply your understanding to distinguish between the right and the wrong. Upanishad talks about Ahara Shuddho Satwo Shuddhi, - if your food is satvik then your mind will become pure and. If your mind becomes pure, then “satvo shuddho dhruba smrity”, your smriti will become perfect. Nothing can move you from the right smriti. Smriti is the right word. We translate smriti loosely as memory in English. But it is not the right word. When we want to translate any of these technical terms, for example science has now advanced so much, you really cannot translate those words in Indian languages any more. We have crossed that stage. Similarly as far as Hindu religion is concerned the concepts that we have in our scriptures, Vedas, Upanishads and Puranas, cannot be translated. So the best thing is to explain the word. If you are just trying to translate, it will not express the full meaning. Smriti is a general thing. Here it says यथाविद्यास्तथास्मृतिः - As is you knowledge, so is you smriti. Smriti is extremely important and knowledge is extremely important. So, some extremely foolish people keep on talking about why we need to study, Sri Ramakrishna did not study, and somebody told Sri Ramakrishna that you have not studied, and Sri Ramakrishna said Oh! How much I have listened! When it comes to acquiring knowledge whether you study or you listen, they are all the same. You need to have knowledge. Anyone who doesn't have a thorough knowledge is not expected to grow in spirituality. Now if you come up with some solitary example of this prophet and that prophet that is immaterial. Even they had some kind of knowledge which we don't know. And if you have one exception on whom God made a very special grace for some purpose that doesn't prove the law. Simply because some exception is happening doesn't mean that the entire thing will be like that. If you have a few raindrops falling on you it doesnt mean the rainy season has arrived. For the rainy season to arrive it has to be torrential rain day after day.
Knowledge plays such an important role in religion. People think that religion is about belief. Religion is not about belief, religion is about knowledge. Knowledge from the external world, knowledge from the inner world and knowledge that you acquire through meditation, through samadhi.
And now comes the explanation according to which the Lord, the supreme Lord, that is Brahman, when he wants to create, he first imagines, we don't know what he imagines, because at that time there was no mind. Upanishad says एकोहं बहुस्याम प्रजायेय - - I am one, I will be many. Whatever it is, the knowledge that these great saints and prophets had in the depths of their meditation, that is pure consciousness, and reality. That makes sense because consciousness has absolutely nothing to do with this inner world. And yet the entire thing has come from there. So it says the supreme Lord starts imagining. The moment he starts imagining first is born Jiva, that is the pure consciousness, the infinite consciousness. It now appears as infinite points of consciousness, instead of being infinite consciousness. There is a difference between the creation and the state beyond creation.

Consciousness is infinite. The reality is consciousness is infinite. When there is creation, an infinite number of consciousnesses seem to exist. But can there be? Yes. How? Think of a hall of mirrors. You enter there and every mirror is now reflecting your image. And there are now thousands and thousands of you, depending on how many mirrors there are.. Here we are talking of reflection and it is about imagination. It's all the same. What Gaudapada is telling, what Mandukya Karika is discussing here, is from the aspect of spiritual truth, spiritual experience. He explained whatever he had to. Being a sage he will also tell you what is the ultimate truth. The ultimate truth is that the Lord, He imagines and the first thing to come is Jiva. Jiva is that imagined multiplicity of consciousness. And that is what makes me appear different from you and you are different from me and others. So we have so many people listening here, we all appear different, because there is an apparent difference in consciousness. Actually there is none, and this is what we shall see as we proceed. First thing is that the Infinite starts imagining. The Infinite now appears as infinite points of consciousness. Is it something real? No. Not all real. Or you can think of a light bulb and you put a board there to cover it completely. And the board has hundreds and thousands of holes of different sizes. Now what happens? The light streaming out from there will appear to be so many. Is there any difference? No, there is no difference. Suppose you think of yourself as one of those rays coming out. Just travel back and cross that board, of course the nature of the board is such it wont let you pass, you will realise that you are the source and you are never different from the source and no one who is appearing outside is different from the source. . Because that is the wall of the mind. This is the best example I can give you. This is what happens . I appear different from you and this difference is extremely real. Because it is in the world of mind. If you somehow retrace your steps and go back to the source, you will realise that you are the same as the source and you are never different from the source and all that appear on the other side of the wall are the same as you. Yet on that part they are all different. Once the Jiva has been imagined, the Jiva starts imagining two different sets of things. One is the external imagination in the form of five sense objects, Shabda, Sparsha, Rup, Rasa, Gandha, the objects with five characteristics of taste, smell, sight etc. And it also creates the instruments to grasp those things and they are known as organs (Indriya). And we have five sense organs. Since we have five sense organs we have five sense objects. Suppose we had a sixth organ there would have been a sixth sense object. So in that case would our scriptures change? No. They will not change, because the principle remains the same. The Jiva, the pure consciousness, first creates the internal and external. Actually not first and second, but actually it is created simultaneously. And then the game begins. And how does this game begin? Acharya Shankar has given a beautiful explanation. Say that the Jiva experiences certain things with help of its sense organs and that becomes knowledge. Because it has experience. And that knowledge goes and

becomes memory and that memory now becomes a state of knowledge that pushes the entire thing forward which differentiates into actions and actor and effect. That again brings in fresh knowledge. And now this cycle is on. Acharya has very beautifully said that, say for example when you once you eat something, certain things happen, because the senses are involved. You feel satiated. Now the memory is there, I had taken this food, so I felt satisfied. Next time when you will feel hungry you go for the same thing. Suppose somebody applies a trick and it so that when you go the second time, you don't get the same experience. Now it so happens that we experience something and that experience creates a state of knowledge which says that next time I need something, I need to do the same thing. And now has come a situation for performing something. And now the game is on. Because now you perform and it will form a memory Because it forms a memory, it will break into three. I become the actor, the doer, eating becomes the action and to get satisfied becomes the effect. And once I get satiated or dissatisfied, it will add to some memory and that memory will now act. And the game of the world is on. How the game of the world is on? Through this process. First the Lord creates Jiva. Jiva has the power to think and the power to act. It is consciousness all powerful. It creates the game of the world. How? In the form of subject and object. Subject is the senses, object is the sense objects. It grabs, it gets some experiences. Once it gets some experience, it becomes memory. Now memory impells or memory goads these senses to perform accordingly. The game is on and when we have lived for millions and billions of births, we have completely forgotten who we are. Now we are impelled and sometimes compelled, sometimes goaded by these memories. And this memory has come only through our knowledge - यथाविद्यास्तथास्मृतिः - It is good to remember this. If you start studying scriptures a lot, if you start dwelling on scriptures a lot, your knowledge becomes different. Similarly once you start getting pains in life from your beloved, your memory now becomes different. Once your memory becomes different, you like to be different. You want to move away from there. Aldous Huxley,the famous writer wrote a wonderful book called “Brave new world”. Aldous Huxley was extremely impressed by the Indian system of thought and he was also extremely disillusioned by Christianity. In that book, he came up with his concept of Varna, where talks about there will be some souls and the entire thing is the result of artificial insemination and they are developed into workers just like honeybees. They are given electric shocks every time they touch flowers or anything that has some aesthetic value. So the moment they see flowers, they move away from that. Just like that from the things that attract you, once you get a big shock from them, your memory will change. And this is what happens. We have become such a bundle of memory and we get impelled in the form of what we want to avoid sometimes and what we want to see. We don't even realise that the whole game began a long time ago when the Lord created this universe where I got created, not that we willed, not that we

wanted. After that the game goes on, the process is the same. The senses experience something, that experience becomes knowledge and knowledge becomes memory. Next time, when the same situation takes place, the memory pushes the idea and we go for it. That cycle goes on.

22. Reality is what you perceive

So far we have seen that Gaudapada in Mandukya Karika has conclusively shown that the waking state is in no way superior to the dream state or even that the waking state is not a dream state and wonderfully states that the perception that is outside is simply because they are coming through different organs. So the question arises who is imagining and how is this imagination taking place? And what is reality? We have already seen that reality is what you see and what you perceive. That means reality is what you think reality to be. Reality is what you see what you hear it to be. Because very rarely you know the real as the real. It is apparent and is always what reaches us that appears to us as real. And in this series in the Karika 16 we mentioned जीवं कल्पयते पूर्वं ततो भावान्पृथग्विधान। बाह्यानाध्यात्मिकांश्चैव यथाविद्यास्तथास्मृतिः - and there we mentioned यथाविद्यास्तथास्मृतिः - as is one's knowledge so is his memory, i.e. smriti, As is your memory, so are your experiences. Depending on what your experiences are they will become further memories and that is how life goes. And also in the first line of the verse we have seen that Atman, pure consciousness, imagines self to be Jiva. This is something that goes in Vedanta continuously. This idea that the world we see around us, the pleasure and pain, the achievements and failure are all imaginations. Not our imagination because we ourselves are the imagination. Imagination of the supreme Lord.

Before we begin let me tell you a very simple, very ordinary incident from my own life. And I never forgot it. So when I was a young student one monk who was deep into gardening had planted some special seeds and beautiful flowers had come up. They were just like leaves flowers and deep red with jet black at the centre, And it was amazing.Beautiful flower. And we did not know what its name was. So we kids, whenever we passed we gave it a name. And because no one had seen anything like that. After some time we found that there was a placard, saying "MY name is Clianthus Dampieri". It is an Italian flower. Now this Swamiji, who is deep into gardening, must have got the seeds from somewhere. You might find pictures of flowers on the internet. And I did not realise then and now that I am into this kind of life , I am into thinking, I am into understanding, I realised how true it was. This is the world. Here is the world, we look at the world, I look at you, you look at me and you wonder

who I am. I wonder who you are. We give names and attach a price tag to each other, till we realise what is the worth of that person. Who that person truly is. In many areas in the Hindi belt, particularly in Delhi, whenever there is a quarrel somebody will say do you know who I am? No , I don't know who you are? How do I know? If you were really somebody you would have had a bodyguard. And he would have carried some plaque, stating such and such a person. How would I know who you are? This is the problem. To me I am very important. Because to me I am real. But to the onlookers I am nobody. He or she just puts a stamp on my existence. He is so and so and is capable of this and that. Exactly this happens with ultimate reality, the Atman. Atman, pure consciousness, Sachchidananda, Brahma, appears differently to different persons. This discussion is about that. What is reality and how people perceive different kinds of reality and why they perceive reality differently. So, here before I continue, just two simple stories, one from Sri Ramakrishna, who very beautifully said that, there was a small forest and on one of the trees there was a Chameleon. They change colours. Somebody saw it and thought it to be blue, another thought it to be red, someone else yellow, like that. And a person who stayed there said, look I'm staying here and I know it has many colours. The thing is the persons who saw the Chameleon blue or red, are not wrong. But their understanding is coloured by their perception.The other one is about Swami Vivekananda. Swamiji was once in Gujarat, and he was staying at a place where there was a big desert and everyday he used to see a pond at a distance. One day he was roaming in that area and he felt thirsty and went near it and there was no water. He suddenly realised that it was a mirage. Later also he used to see that pond but he knew that it was not water but mirage. We keep on thinking differently till we have not perceived the reality. Once we know the reality, appearance does not delude us. So everything in life depends on this simple thing that you should know the realities the way it is. Otherwise you will keep on concluding because you will be looking only at the appearance, you will only be concluding things and those conclusions will not be right although that will serve your purpose as we shall see. So the conclusion here is that once you know the reality, Atman as Atman, you are never deluded. And unless you know the principle behind it, there will always be confusion. Why? See the example that I often use is Newtonian world, the world offered by Newton, where the laws were fixed, where the force was mass multiplied by acceleration. But the nature of reality as in Vedanta does not go by Newtonian physics. It was by the uncertainty principle of Heisenberg, where the element of not knowing something correctly is always there. However once you know the principle

that it is like this, your perception changes. The relation and the comparison between Newtonian Physics and religion ends there. We should not stretch the comparison. However the main thing is that you know about the world, what you want to know. According to this uncertainty principle, those of you who have some background in physics would know that

there is a subatomic particle, say electron, moving. If you want to know what is its velocity you can know to some amount of accuracy and the more accurate you are about it, the less accurate will be its position where it was. So you can never know it fully. But what you can know is the equation.

Similarly, If you can know the equation Aham Brahmasmi, you know that you are Brahman, you have known the reality. So now you know Atman and if you know consciousness, you cannot know the world. If you know the world, you cannot know Atman. And the more you know of the world, more accurately you know of the world, you are deep into making money etc., the less you will know of God. Now this is my conclusion. I have not read anywhere. You can always question it. Somewhere there is this uncertainty principle that the more you know of one thing , the less you know of the other. This principle applies to this world too. Similarly the person who is deep into God, as Sri Ramakrishna was, the world had become completely immaterial for Him. So these twin objects, twin realities of God and the world, this is how it goes. What Upanishad says is that all your suffering and all your miseries are simply because you are attached to this world. If you want to get out of it, know the reality and you will not be deluded by the appearance. So with that idea clear, let us get to the different concepts of reality, as perceived in the Indian system of thought.

The question is raised that there is only Atman. If there is only Atman, why is it that people perceive it differently? Now when we say differently, they don't mean as human beings and animals as a Zoologist will think. It is not in the way we think of different species etc. It is not in that sense.

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अनिश्चिता यथा रज्जुरन्धकारे विकल्पिता।

सर्पधारादिभिर्भवैस्तद्वदात्मा विकल्पितः ॥ Karika 17॥

As the rope, whose nature is not really known, is imagined in the dark to be a snake , a water line etc., so also is the Atman imagined (in various ways)

निश्चितयां यथा रज्ज्वां विकल्पो विनिवर्तते।

रज्जुरेवेति चाद्वैतं तद्वदात्मविनिश्चयः ॥ Karika 18 ॥

When the real nature of the rope is ascertained all illusions about it disappear and there arises the conviction that it is the one (unchanged) rope and nothing else; even so is the nature of conviction regarding Atman.

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Doubt is because we don't know. Once we have firm knowledge, everything becomes clear. So Atman is imagined as Prana and other numberless ideas, which we shall discuss one after another. Now all this is due to Maya, an appearance belonging to Atman. It appears itself to be deluded. Here lies the total mystery. Total mystery about reality and appearance.

When you see a rope lying in darkness, you may conclude that it is a snake. You may conclude that it is a waterline. You might think that there is a crack. Once you know that it is a rope, You will not get deluded ever. The example mirage that Swamiji saw is one example. There is a beautiful story by Sri Ramakrishna where there was a person lying by the roadside fast asleep. So a drunkard came and it was early morning. He thought Oh my God, he must have drunk a lot and that is why he is lying flat here. And then a thief came and thought he must have done a big theft and so he is sleeping here. Then came a sadhu, and he said, he must have done Jap-dhyan the whole night and that is why he is sleeping like this. Now we don't know who that person truly was. But we know that depending on the mindset of the onlooker reality changed it appearance

This is what happens with reality in this universe. The reality is pure consciousness but we do not know that. Because when we look at reality we always look at it with our senses and our mind. Particularly our mind. Because we look with our mind, reality now appears as what the mind sees. Once you know what it truly is you will never be deluded. You will never have any doubts. Vidyate hṛdaya-granthiś, chidyante sarva-saṁśayāḥ -That is why, in our tradition in Vedanta, they say that once you know Atman, all your doubts are dispelled for ever. Your doubts are dispelled completely. For example when you think that someone loves you. Is it for facial form? You have doubts. The moment you have doubt, you don't know the thing correctly, you don't know the person correctly. Once you know it correctly, like a baby, who does not have any doubt about her mother. Why are we not sure about something? Because we do not know it. Once we know it there will never be any confusion. The most important thing in life is to be firm about knowledge. Nothing like knowledge. And knowledge has been important in every religion. Most people do not know that. Every religion extols knowledge. Once you have complete full firm knowledge of something you will never be deluded again. So why is it that in spite of this truth, we perceive things differently?

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प्राणादिभिरानन्तैश्च भावैरेतैर्विकल्पितः।

मायैषा तस्य देवस्य यया सम्मोहितः स्वयम् ॥ Karika 19॥

The Atman is imagined as Prana and other endless objects. This is due to Maya (ignorance) of the luminous (Atman itself) by which it is (as it were) deluded.

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In Greek mythology Narcissus was a very good looking young man. Once he had a chance to look at his image in a pond. He was so charmed that he continued sitting there till he died. Atman, which is pure consciousness, has every power. It creates its Maya, the divine power and looks at it and gets charmed. But they are not two different things. Sri Ramakrishna used to say, Brahman and Shakti, Consciousness and its essence is power. Consciousness and its essence, Shakti is the essence of Brahman, Brahman is the ultimate reality, pure consciousness. Consciousness and its essence. So

sometimes consciousness keeps its essence within itself and sometimes it lets its essence spread. Something like many examples given by Sri Ramakrishna. Think of incense sticks. They have essence, The beautiful smell within it. Burn it, the smell spreads. Pure consciousness is just like that. It opens itself up and its essence, power, majesty spreads. मायैषा तस्य देवस्य यया सम्मोहितः स्वयम्- it gets attracted by its own beauty. Something like the story of pygmalion. Again in Greek mythology. Actually Greek mythologies are beautiful to explain certain aspects of the world. So there was this Pygmalion who created a wonderful statue and he loved it so much that he kept watching it and he watched and he watched and fell in love with that statue. Brahman when it lets its essence spread, it falls in love with it. What is this pen? Just an aspect of Brahman. Just a small wave of Brahman. Who am I? Just a small wave of Brahman. What is this microphone? Same. And yet we see all these things as different. This difference is the world. This difference is Maya. In essence everything is Brahman. Now this is what this Karika, Mandukya Upanishad will say that these things cannot be understood by reasoning, by mere listening, by mere reading. To understand this you need to meditate. You need to go deep. You need to realise the truth. Once you realise the truth, you will not be deluded again. So why is there so many theories of creation? So do we have so many theories of existence? The sage says it is because God creates Maya, मायैषा तस्य देवस्य यया सम्मोहितः स्वयम् - The lord himself creates the Maya. Like a spider it creates its web and then stays on it. We have to use too many examples just to make this idea clear. But this idea can never be clear because you can only understand these things when you meditate.

Now with Vedanta becoming more and more popular in the west and in South India also many people listen to books like Mandukya Karika. I don't know how much they understand. Probably they understand. Else why should they read?. But personally I come across people , who ask me questions regarding this and that and thousand other things, why Maya, who created Maya. You cannot understand these things theoretically. You need to listen to these things again and again, then contemplate on it and finally go all out for meditation. And then you know. Once you know, you will not be deluded. So, now comes verse 20.

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प्राण इति प्राणविदो भूतानीति च तद्विदः।
गुणा इति गुणविदस्तत्त्वानीति च तद्विदः ॥ Karika 20॥]

Those that know only Prana, call it (Atman) Prana, those that know Bhutas call it Bhutas, those knowing Gunas, call it Ginas, those knowing Tattvas call it Tattvas.

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Different theories of creation and so different theories of reality and you will simply be surprised by the number of theories that India has, and each of these theories has been given by a sage. Just the other day, I was reading somewhere that said the western scientists do not even consider the Hindu religion as a religion and Hindu philosophy as a

philosophy, simply because they think Hindus are idolaters. I wish they had listened to our Mandukya Karika. And just listen to the number of theories that India has and Gaudapada gives us some of these. There is a very famous work on Philosophy Sarva-darsana-Samgraha (by Vidyaranya) . There some other philosophies are mentioned. Number of philosophies and in India every philosophy is treated as a sub-religion you can say because Hindu religion is the mother religion and everything else is a small part of it. All of them accept the Vedas as the ultimate truth. Something like Christianity and its sects. Christianity is the overarching religion and there are different saints and sects. Those who worship Prana (these are the Vaisheshikas- there are six major philosophies: Samkhya, Yog, Nyaya and Vaisheshika and Mimamsa and Vedanta, Samkhya and Yog are almost similar, Naya and Vaisheshika has little difference. Actually they have more similarities than differences. So basically there are three systems which spread into six. Vaisheshika people focus on Prana. They think of Prana, energy. Everytime you hear that God is energy, everytime you hear that energy is the ultimate truth, you know that he is talking Vaisheshika without knowing it. You must have heard many people talking about the ultimate being energy. For example , in Physics when they talk about the Big Bang, they talk about energy , they don't know that, without their knowing they are into the philosophy of the Vaisheshika. Wonderful! Isn't it! And says **भूतानीति च तद्विदः** - those who know Bhutas , Bhutas mean elements.

These are the materialists, Charvaka and others. And they accepted only four elements. They did not even accept ether (akasha) and in Greek philosophy you will come across philosophers, who accept only four kinds of atoms. And there are some who accept five. So Charvak accepts only four and they believe matter to be the ultimate. Now when you look at science, the moment you bring in Einstein there, who says matter and energy are the same. Charvak, the materialists, consider matter is the ultimate and the Vaisheshikas consider energy is the ultimate. So the whole of western science today is essentially a combination of Charvak and Vaisheshika. Because Cahrvak did not know that matter and energy are the same and if they had there would have been a total collapse of their system, because they do not know how to relate. Because if they wanted to relate, they would have to go to the Vaisheshika system. So let us assume that the Vaisheshika system is superior. Now science is about the combination of Charvak and Vaisheshik, Prana (energy) and Bhuta (matter). For those who know the Gunas (gunas are three, Satva, Rajas, Tamas) the universe evolves from these three Gunas (qualities). This is believed by Samkhyavadi. And then there is Tattvajna. They call them Tattvajna but they are basically Shaiva. They are the worshippers of Shiva. They believe in three - the terms are Atma, Avidya and Shiva. There is Atman, and there is Avidya, that is ignorance and there is Shiva, the Lord. So you have three realities, Shiva the Lord, (they are Shaiva), Shakti, the system of Shakti, that is Shakti philosophy also

comes from there only, Shiva and Shakti they are one and the same. And from Shiva and Shakti flow out Atman and Avidya. So this universe that you see, in fact this is much similar to Christianity and Islam. In Christianity and Islam also similar things happen. There is God, there is soul and there is world. But Shaiva being an Indian system of thought world will never be ultimately real. This is the beauty of the Indian system of thought except the Charvak, who are actually used as the punching bag. Every system of philosophy takes up Charvak, the materialists. Charvak the materialist believed in enjoying the world. They were absolutely not interested in the spiritual reality of the world. For them whatever is there has come out of the matter. And that is why every philosophy uses it to disprove that to prove their own system. Other than Charvak, no system in India will ever say the matter to be the ultimate truth. When Vaisheshika also says that Prana is the ultimate truth, they believe in some form of consciousness. Those of you who are more interested in knowing about it, we have talks of Naya and Vaisheshikam, we have one playlist on Hinduism . There you will find six systems of philosophy discussed individually.

So there are three realities according to Shaiva, They are actually dualists and so they believe in God which is Shiva, Atman that is Soul and Soul is different from Shiva. And Avidya, this Avidya actually is responsible for matter.

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पादा इति पादविदो विषया इति तद्विदः।
लोका इति लोकविदो देवा इति च तद्विद्: ॥ karika 21॥

Those acquainted with the quarters (padas) call it quarters, those with objects, the objects, those with Lokas, the Lokas, those with Devas the Devas.

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Again a very interesting sloka. Interesting because there are people who believe these quarters (Visva, Taijasa, Prajna) . They consider these three quarters to be ultimate. Now, who those philosophers were, are not mentioned here. I personally do not know who they were. They must be some sect of Vedanta who consider these three transformations to be the ultimate. Basically they believed in transformation. So sometimes you have Sthula, Sukhsma, Karan. One going into the other, not the fourth one mind it. Only the three. पादा **इति पादविदो विषया इति तद्विदः** - Vishaya , they believed that there are five Vishayas , objects, they are not the four object of the Charvak, these are different. So commentators say that they are thinkers like Vatsayan. Now there are quite a few Vatsayan in the Hindu system of thought. One of them is who gave Kamsutra. But this Vatsayan is not from that and according to some this is Paksalswamy. Pakslaswamy Vatsayan and he belonged to the Naya system of thought. And he popularised this idea of five objects, Shabda, Sparsha, Rup, Rasa, Gandha. Senses of sound, touch, sight, taste and smell. These are the ultimate reality. Just Imagine how many philosophies are coming up! And they all based their philosophy on

the Veda. And then there are Lokbettas. लोका इति लोकविदो - Loka is anything that can be experienced. Can be seen. Loka means that which can be seen. So the commentators say they are Pouranikas, those who belong to the Pauranik system of thought. They believe that the Loka is the ultimate reality. The Lokas are the spheres of existence. For example Arth , this is one loka and might have heard of Bhuh Bhuvah and svah, as in Gayatri mantra. Svah is the ultimate subtle sphere, Bhuvah is in between and Bhuh is the physical universe. So the entire Universe that you see, anything that can be perceived , experienced through our senses, and with the add ons like telescope etc., belongs to Bhuh. So is the ultimate in between in Bhuvah. Then later some more were added, Bhu, Bhuvah,svah, Jana, Maha, Tapa, Satva. Because just three lokas are not sufficient to explain the huge gamut of existence. Similarly they came up again with seven kinds of Patal and as the number of Puranas increased and as the size increased, they came up with different kinds of heaven, different kinds of hell. According to them these are the ultimate truth. And the goal was to reach the highest which was Satvaloka. And later this Satvaloka was equated with Baikunthadhama as the Vaishnavas believed and Shivaloka as the Shaibas believe. However, by very definition, these lokas are temporary. But temporary not in the sense as we consider, but temporary may be in terms of an enormously long time . In terms of the number of years it could be, maybe fourteen and fifteen zeros are there after 1. So you stay there for a long time and then you come back.

Then **देवा इति च तद्विदः** - there are people who believe in gods to be the ultimate reality. This is the Vaidic people, some sages of the Vedas who believed the gods to be the ultimate reality. Now what is interesting is that, those of you who are interested in knowing something about the Vedas we have around 10 talks in English and 40 in Bengali. You will find it in the playlist. You will get some idea of the Vedas. In the Vedas we find there are the gods (with small g) and these gods they appear similar to Greek Gods but they are not really Greek gods. Because when you try to look into their personality , they are like the masks of the Infinite. If they are the masks of the Infinite, they cannot be like Greek gods. However, here when it is talked **देवा इति च तद्विदः** the God here means with a small g. They are the ultimate and Yajnas were developed. Today we equate the Veda with Yajna, sacrifice. You want a son, have a sacrifice. You want rain, have a sacrifice, yajna. You want to prove that you are the greatest king, have a yajna. These are the people who believe in the supremacy of the Deva, Gods. And of course, later it will come. There are people who believe in Yajna. So people who believed in Deva and people who believed in Yajna, are slightly different. People who believed in Deva, also went by offering prayers to them, talking about them. This has been beautifully discussed in Isavasyopanishad. This talk is there in our playlist. You can

listen to that also. You will get an idea, where it says that there is Vidya and there is Avidya. Avidya is Yajna and Vidya is Devta vishayak jnan - Knowledge about gods - Devatas. When you go all out to know about the gods through theoretical knowledge about the gods, it ruins you. And when you go only for Karma, action, Yajna, you are in a different kind of darkness. The goal is to make use of all your faculties and be one with Atman.

On to the next Karika (22)

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वेदा इति वेदविदो यज्ञ इति च तद्विदः।

भोक्तेति च भोक्तृविदो भोज्यमिति च तद्विदः ॥ Karika 22॥

Those knowing the Vedas, call It the Vedas, those acquainted with sacrifices, call It the sacrifice (Yajna) ; Those conversant with the enjoyer , designate It as the enjoyer, and those with the object of enjoyment, call it such.

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People who study the Vedas, they consider Veda to be the ultimate. Mimansak- Mimansaks are those who follow Mimansa which is one of the Hindu philosophies. Mimansa considers Vedas to be the ultimate. Now Veda has two aspects. One is known as Jnanarashi - meaning knowledge and Sahbdarashi - meaning words. What is very interesting about Jnanrashi (mass of knowledge) and Shabdarashi (mass of words) is that under normal conditions anyone will think, persons like me and you, will think that Newton's equations are not mere equations. They point at a particular aspect of reality. E=mc^2, is not just mental gymnastics. It is something knowledge that can be applied. Even Einstein did not believe in that. Jnanarashi means the Vedas are a mass of knowledge. If a person acquires that knowledge he can make use of it. Surprisingly in Indian traditions the Veda came to be admired as, worshipped as Shabdarashi (bank of words) too. That is why the Brahnin instead of focussing more on acquiring knowledge, focussed on memorising them. And today also you will find that Brahmins who follow the Veda, they focus more on memorising and pronouncing it correctly. And they are extremely respected people. Personally I respect them hugely. I cannot memorise them and I hardly know any mantra properly of the Veda, memorising I mean. I know the essence. I belong to the Jnanarashi type. I don't belong to Shabdarashi. So I don't look down upon them. I had the highest respect for them. Of course they don't have any respect for me. So no issues. Here when they are talking about Veda, **वेदा इति वेदविदो,** they mean to say Veda the shabdarashi, the mass of words. Mimansaks are masters of it.

यज्ञ इति च तद्विदः and there were people who believed Yajna is everything. There was a sage philosopher, Bodhayan, he emphasised on that.Those of you who might have studied Mahavarat, we have a few talks in English we could not continue with the series because of lack of time,so there in the beginning itself there is a discussion that how these Brahmins, who were into Yajna, were the

followers of Bodhayan or may be some other sage. They believed that these mantras, these yajnas had so much power that, if they performed Yajna properly even Indra, the King of Gods, would be at the spot where they wanted Him. And this belief, particularly in the form of Tantra, which is an extremely degenerated form of Yajna, continues to be in India. And for most problems gullible people go to these Tantriks, with the belief that they could hit their enemies by those mantras, by the performance of certain rituals and they feel that they can get rid of their own problem through these Mantras, these Yajnas.

And **भोक्तेति च भोक्तृविदो भोज्यमिति च तद्विदः** - This is very interesting. it says those conversant with enjoyer, designated as enjoyer and those with the object of enjoyment call it such. It is the cook, those who are very good at cooking believe that everything is about cooking. The term is Bhokta, and Bhojya. There are people who enjoy, their enjoyment is about everything so here Acharya Shankar does not even give any commentary on it. Just says that people who are very good at cooking, they perceive the ultimate reality in one way and people who enjoy food, they perceive reality in another way. Imagine reality, Atman being perceived by some as the God and by some as Yajna, by some as Veda. and by some as objects of enjoyment, cooking!

Swamiji told a story on this. A kingdom was attacked. So the King invited people to suggest. The ironsmith said let us put an iron wall. Wood cutter said let's put a wooden wall. And those who dealt in leather said, nothing like leather Sir. So depending on how we perceive things , depending on how we are established in something, we look at reality like that.

Some other say that this is not about cooking but about aspects of Samkhya. In Samkhya there are two aspects, one is pure consciousness who enjoys the universe and there the universe itself is known as Prakriti. So according to some, Prikriti is the ultimate reality and for others Purush, the consciousness is the ultimate reality. Thus भोक्तेति च भोक्तृविदो भोज्यमिति च तद्विदः, Bhokta and Bhoktri can be explained both as prakriti and purusha and also as enjoyment and enjoyer.

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सूक्ष्म इति सूक्ष्मविदः स्थूल इति च तद्विदः।
मूर्ति इति मूर्तविदोऽमूर्त इति च तद्विदः ॥ Karika 23॥

The Knowers of the subtle designate It as the subtle, the Knowes of gross call it the gross. Those that are familiar with a Personality (having form) call it a person, and those that do not believe in anything having a form call it a void.

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There are people who know the subtle things and those who know the subtle things feel consciousness all over the body. It is partly in some Jain theory, Jains have this kind of theory where they feel that the entire thing to be consciousness spread all over the body. And there are people who believe the entire thing to be gross. Like Charvak etc. And

Murtavadi, those who believe in idols, those who believe in God with form, they believe that ultimate reality is God with form. Amurtavadi , those who believe God to be formless say that reality is formless. You know how the world has been fighting against idolatry and in the process how many heads are rolling because people who want to prove that God does not have a form. This has been going on for thousands of years, from the day that Abraham broke the idols and he came up with the concept of one supreme God. That was the birth of Judaism. Since then, the heads are rolling. In the name of destroying the idols, heads get rolled.

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काल इति कालविदो दिश इति च तद्विदः।
वादा इति वादविदो भुवनानीति तद्विदः ॥ 24॥

The knowers of time call it time, the knowers of space (ether) call it space (ether). Those versed in disputation call it the problems in dispute and the Knower of the world call it the world.

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Those who know about time, the astrologers and all, they believe time to be the ultimate. I know one gentleman who is into astrology. And he was saying he has scientific background and he is also well established in astrology and he said, he is also a devotee and he said look I know that it is not believable, everything is God's will and when God wills he gets things done through the planets because in Astrology, planets and their movements play a very important role. And if you go to some astrologer particularly if he is a quack he will go on telling you Shani is attacking you , Rahu is attacking you etc. However, those who are true astrologers talk about time. You might have noticed that sometimes even if you do wrong things nobody can touch you and sometimes you do all the good things and even then everything goes wrong, they turn to ashes. In the entire Hindi belt there is this wonderful expression, "waqt kahrab chal raha hai" - the time is bad. Now Christians and the western world and other religions don't have this concept. This concept has come to India from astrologers, the Kalavida. So for them time is everything. And this time manifests as smaller units of time and motion that you see, any movement that you see, is part of that Kala, Time - काल इति कालविदो.

दिश इति च तद्विदः - and there are people who consider all the directions to be the ultimate truth.

Because there is Swarodaya, we don't even know of this philosophy, they are no longer current, they used to believe that.

And वादा इति वादविदो Vadabetta are those who believe in the power of words. They are Mantravad, Dhatuvad, in recent times again there is a popular theory coming up known as Sphota, word, they consider everything to be sound. Like as in Christianity we have the beginning was word and of

course Christians said by word they mean Jesus Christ. And those who know भुवनानीति तद्विदः - All the Bhuvan. which are all the spheres of existence and for them reality is fourteen Bhuvans.

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मन इति मनोविदो बुद्धिरिति च तद्विदः।
चित्तमिति चित्तविदो धर्मधर्मौ च तद्विदः ॥ Karika 25॥

The Cognizers of the mind call it the mind; of the Buddhi (intellect) the Buddhi; The Citta (Mind-stuff) , the Citta, and the Knowers of Dharma (righteousness) and Adharma (unrighteousness) call it one or the other

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So, more theories come.

मन इति मनोविदो - Those who believe in mind, they say mind is everything . 'Bouddha philosophy बुद्धिरिति च तद्विदः, Buddhi is everything. From them KsanikaVijanvad etc has come.

Actually Buddhists, spoke of consciousness, and they have come up with so many terms like Abeya,consciousnss and things like that. So they were so thoroughly beaten up in India logically that they had to run away to other countries. And from there they are now preaching.

Then there are people who consider the totality of mind known as Chitta as everything - **चित्तमिति चित्तविदो.**

And mimamsaka who described everything as Dharma and Adharma - धर्मधर्मौ च तद्विदः . So Mimamsak consider Veda to be shabdarashi they also believe Veda to talk about Dharma, what is right. So Mimamsak have different definitions particularly in this work. So those who believe in Dharma they say that Dharma is the last word, Dharma is the reality.

You will be surprised to know that Shankaracharya single handedly demolished each of these philosophies. Each of them. If you go through his work, it is amazing, unbelievable. The kind of talent that he had. Single handedly he discussed and demolished them through argument.

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पञ्चविंशक इत्येके षड्विंश चापरे।
एकत्रिंसंक इत्याहुरनन्त इति चापरे ॥ Karika 26II

Some say that Reality consists of twenty-five categories, others twenty-six, while there are others who conceive It as consisting of thirty-one categories and lastly people are not wanting who think such categories to be infinite.

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There are people, the Samkhya followers,who believe in 25 Tattvas and then there are Yog philosophers who believe in 26. Now they have more or less adjusted to 24. And then there

are Pashupat from Saiva sects, they believe in 31 tattvas, to them these Tattvas are everything.

I am glad that I was not a student of Philosophy. I would have surely failed, believe me. I would have failed. Just imagine the number of philosophies we have! And there are many more philosophers who go by different aspects of reality, so that means there is no end.

There is a very beautiful Sanskrit expression मुंडे मुंडे मतिर्भिन्ना - every mind has a different idea about reality.

Each sage has come up about reality in their own way. We followed. In recent times, Ramana Maharshi, J Krishnamurthy, and Shri Arobinda have talked about similar things. Unlike them, what we discussed are all absolutely dissimilar.

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लोकाँल्लोकविदः प्राहुराश्रमा इति तद्विदः।
स्त्रीपुंनपुंसकं लैङ्गाः परापरमथापरे ॥ Karika27॥

Those who know only to please others call It (Reality) such pleasure; those who are cognizant of Asramas call it Asramas; the grammarians call it the male, female or the neuter, and others know it as Para and Apara.

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The whole thing has not ended here. It continues. Says that लोकाँल्लोकविदः प्राहु, those who know only pleasure, those who know only enjoyment, Sexual enjoyment, other enjoyments, for them that is the reality.

Vedanta negates them at the highest level, But for the relative world, they are not concerned, and they say, this is your view and we can say nothing about it. So those who go by Kamasutras and all that like Vatsayana, who himself was a great sage, they all go by it. Lok is Lokaranjan, those who find enjoyment in this world, different kinds of enjoyment, for them the world is all about enjoyment. So you might have heard this kind of expression the world is for us to enjoy.So this philosophy is an accepted philosophy in India.

And then there are people who believe in Ashrama, Chaturashrama, Brahmacharya,Garhyastha, Vanaprastha, and Sannyasa. For them that is everything.

And then there are people known as Lingavadi. These people are Grammarians (Linga is gender in the sense of male, female, neuter) these are the grammarians. Now grammarians form a very important sect of philosophers. Nowadays of course they have lost their importance, but there was a time when grammarians played a very important role. And here at our university, where I am taking the class, we have these grammarians. They will say they try to find everything as male, female and neuter and the philosophy of life is shaped by these things. And there are people who consider Brahman to be the ultimate. And then comes verse no 28.

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सृष्टिरिति सृष्टिविदो लय इति च तद्विदः।
स्थितिरिति स्थितिविदः सर्वे चेह तु सर्वदा ॥ Karika 28॥

The knowers of creation call it creation;the knowers of dissolution describe it as dissolution and the believers in subsistence believe it to be subsistence. Really speaking these ideas are always imagined in Atman.

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There are people who believe in creation, there are people who believe in destruction, there are people who believe in living stability. So we have different kinds of philosophies depending on which aspect of existence you believe. So what is reality?

I am sure more than 30-40 systems of philosophies were discussed here. Mandukya Karika concludes beautifully.

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यं भावं दर्शनयेद्यस्य तं भावं स तु पश्यति।
तं चावति स भूत्वाऽसौ तद्ग्रहः समुपैति तम् ॥ Karika 29॥

He (the enquirer) cognizes only that idea that is presented to him. It (Atman) assumes the form (of what is cognized) and thus protects (the inquirer) .Possessed by that (idea) he realises it (as the sole essence)

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Depending on what your Guru has shown you, you will see that as the reality. And with time you become one with that aspect, with that Bhava and that Bhava protects you. Of all the sloka in Mandukya Karika, this is my favourite sloka, and when I was studying it, not the first time, but the second time long ago, suddenly the idea about this philosophical world became clear to me. Reality is what you perceive to be real. And this perception comes to you from your teacher. Your parents are your teacher, Society is your teacher, your mind is the teacher, your friends are your teacher and that is how you perceive reality. यं भावं दर्शनयेद्यस्य तं भावं स तु पश्यति - depending upon what Bhava your Guru has taught you, what attitude your Guru has taught, that is the reality for you. That is a wonderful summarising of all the philosophies that were talked about.

23. Your Attitude Protects you

We have already mentioned verse 29 of Vaitathya Prakarana in the last chapter. This Karika deserves much more discussion. We continue with that.

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यं भावं दर्शनयेद्यस्य तं भावं स तु पश्यति।
तं चावति स भूत्वाऽसौ तद्ग्रहः समुपैति तम् ॥ Karika 29॥

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Earlier up to verse no 28, we had a detailed discussion on how our perceptions differ regarding the ultimate reality. And it was a huge list of beliefs and mindsets and it showed how people of different mindsets, different approaches, perceive reality differently.

Gaudapada wrote this wonderful book on Vedanta. He wrote it long ago. Had he been here today, he would have said the way Sri Ramakrishna had told Yato mat, tato path -As many faiths, so many paths. And Gaudapada would have concluded Islam, Christianity and other all these Judaism as different ways of perceiving the reality.

People keep asking why there are so many religions. It is like asking why we have so many branches of Science. Religion is spiritual science, and so naturally there will be different branches. Because they are looking at the reality from different aspects. As far as knowledge of God is concerned, it is infinite knowledge. Because it is infinite knowledge, people will see that infinity differently.

After detailing the different perceptions, Mandukya Karika does not say that they are all wrong. A very beautiful thing. He says these are different ways of looking at reality.

Three major religions of the west, Judaism, Christianity, Islam as also Zoroastrianism, they consider their religion to be true and every other religion to be false. And the teacher of every other religion to be a false prophet. Surprisingly you will find that in India also followers of Ramanuja and followers of Madhwacharya they talk like that, some Vaishnavas talk like that.

But Vedanta will never talk like that. Anyone who has seen the complete picture will never talk like this.

it says Says **यं भावं दर्शनयेद्यस्य तं भावं स तु पश्यति।** - this has been the most favourite sloka from Mandukya Karika for me. Because it cleared lots of cobwebs from my mind, as far as understanding religions is concerned. The disciple grasps, the disciple, mind it, you me are just a disciple, grasp only that idea which is presented to him by his teacher. Here actually the sloka says , the Bhava, that is the idea, is grasped as it has been shown to him. The actual verse says **दर्शनयेद** - that has been shown. **तं चावति स भूत्वाऽसौ** - Atman takes up that very form and thus protects the disciple. The person who is worshipping, absorbed in that idea he realises there is Atman. It is a mind blowing concept. And the verse says **यं भावं दर्शनयेद्यस्य** - the idea,the presentation of the spiritual reality as has been presented to you by your teachers, by the society, by the family in which you are born, by religion in which you are born, whatever is shown to you, your mind grasps that idea as truth , as the reality. And

then Atman,the supreme reality, that which is absolute knowledge, absolute existence and absolute bliss takes up that form and protects you. **चावति -** protects you and you become so absorbed, provided you are a truly spiritual person, you become so absorbed in it that it is this idea that protects you. Actually who protects you? It is Atman that protects you. So when a worshipper of Kali says that Mother Kali will protect him, indeed Mother Kali protects. And worshipper of Vishnu says, Vishnu will protect him. Indeed Vishnu protects him and those who believe in Allah or God or Jehovah and Wahe Guru, they are protected by their respective ideals, their God or ideal. Because Atman takes up that form and protects. And you become so absorbed in it with time, that ultimately you will become one with it. It represents Hindu religion so beautifully, it represents Vyasa, Shankara, Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda's ideas perfectly. Hindu religion stands for this verse. So does Shankaracharya, or Sri Ramakrishna, or Vyasa. This is the reality.

Now before we continue with this, the first thing is the idea that is grasped by your mind and this idea has to come from teacher, family, society, religion in rarest of rare cases it may come from God. Best example of idea coming from God is the founder of Abrahamic religion Abraham himself. During his time, there was no concept of one God, there might have been tribal Gods. Abraham was contemplative by nature and God (whose name cannot be pronounced, came to be known as Jehovah - Yhwh) appeared. He gave him the idea that if you follow me, I will make you a great nation. Same was with Prophet Muhammad. He was in general meditative. And an angel appeared before him and imparted that knowledge. But God rarely directly intervenes. These are rare incidents.

In general, for ordinary mortals, for persons like us, we grasp this idea from our family traditions, from society, from religion and from our spiritual mentors and from the person from whom you get initiation, the Guru.

The perception you have of reality is Bhava. Bhava is an extremely technical term. In colloquial Hindi or Bengali Bhava means rate. You go ask for Iska kya bhav hai, meaning what is its price. Sometimes Bhava is used in the sense of attitude, meaning you are putting on airs, like as somebody says that bahut bhav le rahe ho.

In the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, in Bengali, Sri Ramkrishna often used to ask people tomar bhava ki? How do you look at the supreme reality? That is your bhava, and this perception comes from within your mind, from the society and from a particular teacher. You may know about the beautiful story of Ramanujaa Acharya. Ramanujacharya when he was born, Advaita was the ruling philosophy, and he went to a teacher and Ramanuja was being brought up in Advaitic tradition. And there was one mantra from Upanishad, famous mantra कप्यासं पुण्डरीकमेवमक्षिणी - kapyāsaṃ puṇḍarīkamevamakṣiṇī . Eyes of the LOrd is red and Shankarachya has translated in the simplest form. Kapi asam, kapi means monkey asam -

buttock. Rhesus monkeys buttoks are absolutely red. Now Ramanuja took a very serious offence and he says what attitude and arrogance that you are comparing Lord's eyes with Monkey's buttock. Now this is the problem with many of the theologians, philosophers, logicians, grammarians and all those, who are into. Acharya Shankar is talking about the redness, how best you can compare it. But Ramanujacharya is not satisfied, He takes it as butt. But Acharya Shankar never meant Butt. He meant redness. This problem is very often seen when you quarrel with someone and when you are quarrelling you take fault in everything. I have picked up some real quarrels and I have seen how people change their stand and how people misinterpret and how people focus on something that you never intended to say. That is the way they argue because they do not want to reach a conclusion. They just want to put you down. Now Sri Ramanuja, such a great saint, such a great philosopher and so he said no, it should not be like that. It should be interpreted differently. Kapi - is a very very common term for a monkey. (for example we say Jai Kapeesh to praise Lord Hanuman). But Ramanujacharya said no. It should be broken as Ka and Pi. In sanskrit, a very interesting language and you can interpret any word in any way you want. Because of the rules of conjunctions and rules of compounding, Sandhi and Samasa can play havoc with a word. So he said, should be Kampivati.. One meaning of Kam is water which is never used and pivati..one who drinks water - Sun, Red, so it is the colour of the Sun. And after that the fight did not stop there. It continued and Ramanuja went on contradicting his teacher and finally they parted their ways. So although Ramanuja was brought up in Advaita tradition, he did not continue with that. Idea remains the same - **यं भावं दर्शनयेद्यस्य तं भावं स तु पश्यति**- the attitude, your perception of the reality determines how you will look at the Reality. Reality is here with a capital R. And because of that your everything will change. Has the reality changed? No, reality does not change.

So why so many religions? Because attitudes are different. Why did you have that attitude? It might be from your birth, it might be from your learning, influence of the society, influence of the teacher. Whom are you worshipping then? You are worshipping the same Supreme Reality and that is Atman. Now a Christian will say that I don't believe in your Atman. It is my God, supreme God. It is perfect. But you must say that it is the same God who appears as Vishnu to me and Kali to me and he will say that the God that you are talking about, they are false Gods. Because the Bible, the Old testament says that these are false Gods. I am a jealous God. This is the problem with Abrahamic religions. I don't mean to say this is a problem. What I mean to say is attitude. They have been brought up with that attitude. That is my way or highway. Highway to hell. Simple. It is a very interesting thing. What Hindus say is that the Supreme reality being infinite your perception of that supreme reality will always be different from mine. I am perceiving it through my mind. And the mind will be coloured.

Coloured by the kind of upbringing I had. The kind of learning I had. The kind of things I was taught. In India we have so many religions. If you go to Mumbai, you will find all kinds of people. We have Jews, Parsis, Muslims, Hindus there. Every religion is there and they all practise their own faiths. A Hindu does not have issues with that. The problem lies with the others. They say that my way or Highway. Hindus can never think in that way. What we come across in Vedas “Ekam Sad Vipra Bahudha Vadanti” which means, Truth is one. Sages call it variously.

Same thing is being told in a different language. Why do they call differently? Because **यं भावं दर्शनयेद्यस्य तं भावं स तु पश्यति.** So this if you can try to understand what is being said. Sri Ramkrishna says the same thing in a wonderful story

A washerman has a tub of colour. Whoever comes to colour his cloth, gets it coloured in whatever colour he wants, by dipping in the same tub. Some get Red,some get Blue as they wish. The colour that you want is the colour you will get. So this attitude and this attitude shows. When disciples came to Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Ramakrishna used to look at him and could make out what kind of Bhava he had. And Sri Ramakrishna used to say that he could see a person’s attitude, person’s mind, the way one sees objects in a glass almirah. So what is the great take from this? That verse 29 this is the mother of all philosophies. Philosophers starting from Socrates, to Charvak, to Hegel, to Kant, all fall in this bracket. All have Bhava and are expressed accordingly. **यं भावं दर्शनयेद्यस्य तं भावं स तु पश्यति** - you keep on talking about Vedanta because that is the Bhava he grasps.Somebody is talking about Kali as the ultimate; that is the Bhava he grasps. It is the Atman. And there is nothing wrong with it. Because **तं चावति स भूत्वाऽसौ** - Atman becomes that very thing. When one says I am victimised, he will be victimised as that is your attitude, and he will always be under attack. If you are a materialist, you will believe that you are the matter as modern science, charvaks and Marxists say. Yes, It is the Atman itself that takes up that form. And protects you throughout your life.

तं चावति स भूत्वाऽसौ – Sri Ramakrishna once said that look, what does religion give you? As you grow in devotion, as you grow in knowledge of God, what exactly do you acquire? You don't acquire two horns on your head. Or big beard or a moustache. Sri Ramakrishna beautifully says you acquire the “treasure of Jnana and Bhakti” – জ্ঞান ভক্তির ঐশ্বর্য as said in Bengali. Sri Ramakrishna then goes on explaining. He says Pandavas had so much suffering throughout their life, and they never had peace and they suffered, and Sri Ramakrishna says, look, Lord Krishna himself was with the Pandavas, but yet they

were suffering. However, where are the greater devotees than Pandavas? And greater Jnani than Pandavas, who knew what it means to be spiritual. Pandavas suffered so much, yet never gave up their religion. They held on. Lord Krishna was not giving them anything but the treasure of Jnana and Bhakti.

People think that wealth is everything, people think power is everything, so all over the world people are craving for power. In democracy, everyone thinks that he can be a MLA or a MP. and minister, CM or a PM. Aspire to be an IAS or an IPS. People aspire to be a politician Because they think that those who are into politics of power, are well protected. But are politicians really well protected? Not really. Our PM Indira Gandhi was assassinated. And aspiring PM Rajiv Gandhi was killed. Wealthy people are also killed. Wealthy people also suffer and die. However when there is suffering for a politician, he uses his clout to protect himself from suffering. Doctors are at their beck and call. And those who are wealthy use their wealth to protect themselves.

Diseases will come to the wealthy and powerful. Disease will come to the poor and helpless. And diseases will come to a saint, even to an Avatar, the way Sri Ramakrishna had Cancer. Who protects whom? Nothing can really protect you. Because diseases and death have their run. Nobody can protect you. However your suffering can be mitigated, suffering can be brought down a bit, by the resources that you have. A person who is totally committed to spirituality, totally committed, what Aishwarya (treasure) he acquires? Jnana and Bhakti, the way a politician acquires the treasure of power. It is Jnana and Bhakti, knowledge of supreme reality and devotion to Supreme reality, that protects him. How? The way Sri Ramakrishna used to say it is all mother's wish. And he was more at peace than a person surrounded by power. He was more at peace than a person who has wealth. Now when you think of Indira Gandhi getting killed, Rajiv Gandhi getting killed, we also have Mahatma Gandhi getting killed and we also have Jesus Christ getting killed. So, not only that politicians can be killed, the spiritual persons also do get killed. But see the attitude. Mahatma Gandhi said Hey Ram after being shot.. Jesus said forgive them, they know not what they do. Imagine I tell you dear viewers I will give anything to get that level of composure where you are being tortured to death and you say forgive them. And he was not forgiving. He is asking father in heaven to forgive them . This is Aishwariya of Jnana and Bhakti. You are protected by what you believe in. what you have learnt in your life, that is what protects you.

Some of our viewers have been commenting on why some people are under attack in some countries. Because you did not learn anything. Why people are attacking you? Because you have not learnt anything. No treasure. You neither have the treasure of power, I mean political power, you don't have the power of guns, you don't have the power of gold, and

don't even have the power of Ahimsa that Gandhiji had. You don't have the power of Jesus which was Knowledge and Bhakti. So what are you fit for? You are fit only to be trampled upon. And that is what you are being done, Why blame others? If people trample upon you, only you are responsible as you don't have power and strength. You don't have the treasure. If you have wealth you can purchase power. If you have power you can acquire wealth forcibly. If you have spirituality, you don't care for any of these things. You know that even when you are being butchered, you are one with God. Problem with most of us is that we don't have any Bhava. Sri Ramakrishna used to say “Bhava paka koro” - ripen your Bhava, mature your Bhava. Make your bhava strong. Ask me, do I have any strong Bhava? No I don't. I know. Because if I had, I would be a mine of strength. Which I am not. Because the moment you have Bhava, when you truly acquire some bhava, Atman comes in that form and protects you. - **तं चावति स**.

Now to have the treasure of Jnana and Bhakti, or power or wealth, one has to strive hard. Nothing comes out of imagination.. There is a very beautiful sloka in Sanskrit nahi suptasya singhasya pravishanti mukhe mriga न हि सुप्तस्य सिंहस्य प्रविशन्ति मुखे मृगाः - a sleeping lion does get a deer in his mouth as food. उद्यमेन हि सिध्यन्ति कार्याणि न मनोरथैः - will have to labour, you will have to work. just ask yourselves, what are you striving for. What is the focus of your personality that makes you work? You will find that you are more Buddhist that way - big Zero - shunya. You think you came from Shunya? And you will merge in Shunya? So your life is a Shunya. The great damage that the Buddhists have done! Swamiji says, by saving the life of one goat, Buddha imposed a thousand years of slavery on India. Just ask yourselves, what are you striving for? What is the focus of your personality that makes you work? You will find that you are more Buddhist that way - big Zero - shunya. You think you came from Shunya? And you will merge in Shunya? So your life is a Shunya. The great damage that the Buddhists have done! Swamiji says, by saving the life of one goat, Buddha imposed a thousand years of slavery on India. When somebody attacks you, it is up to you, your Bhava, whether you pray to God to forgive him or to go all out and counterattack. Whatever you do , you need Bhava

Do you believe in Rama? Do you believe in Krishna? Do you believe in Sri Ramakrishna? If you believe in Sri Ramakrishna then go all out for Tyag, go all out for treasure Jnana, Bhakti Are going all out ? Or not? Don't call yourself spiritual. You are protected by what you have. You can never be protected by what you don't have. What do you have in life? One of our highly respected monks was telling a story that he used to serve an extremely learned and senior monk.The junior wanted to be a monk and told the senior that he wanted to be a monk. The senior says what do you have to renounce? Do you have anything that you can

renounce? Have you acquired anything that you can renounce? Do you have anything that can protect you? And protection does not come only through guns. Protection does not come only through gold. The most powerful way to protect yourself is to be established in God consciousness. Think! Neither guns, nor gold! Nor complete non-violence as Gandhiiji had. Nor God consciousness. At least try for these three - Gun, Gold and God. If you have none of these, you are doomed, you will stay doomed and nobody can save you. You may have 33 crore Gods and Goddesses. No one is going to save you. Because, you don't have Bhava.

And **तद्ग्रहः समुपैति तम्** - once you are absorbed in that, it appears as Atman to you.

Yajnavalka was a great sage, we come across his story in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad. He beautifully told his wife that when you love something, you don't love that something as an object. You love that something because you see your own reflection there. You own reflection in the sense of Atman. If you enter a house of mirrors, you keep on moving till you come across a mirror that reflects you beautifully. When you see your image beautifully, stand there for a while admiring your own reflection. When you love your wife and when a lady loves her husband, another person loves his Kids, a mom loves her kids, when a person loves his wealth and a politician loves power it is all because the person sees himself there, the Atman there. That means there is no objective love when Christian say, Jesus loves you, Jesus does not love you objectively. Jesus loves you subjectively. Because the whole universe is his soul. God loves all. God does not discriminate. God does not discriminate between say Jews and Christians, Christians and Hindus. So for God, simply because a person is a Hindu or a Buddhist , he is not going to hell. Hell is reserved for persons who keep on talking of hell all the time. Keep on thinking about hell all the time. And keep on worrying about hell all the time. Because hell is your Bhava and seats are booked for you in hell.

Hindus think of Mukti as goal and as we shall see in the next verse that those who know Atman and those who know the reality, they don't despise others. They don't discredit others. Because they know the truth. So once you have known what is the truth for you, that protects you from all these things that we mentioned . A politician thinks that power can protect him. A wealthy person thinks that wealth can protect him. And a devotee of God, is confident that God will protect him, and if he is not protected by God, he will say that well that was what God wanted. God wants me to suffer. He has no issue about it. Politicians will be getting mad, wealthy persons will be complaining that I spent so much money and yet no relief! This protection is in life, this protection is in death. And materialists are the worst of the lot. Who protects the materialist, say Charbak, or Hegel who came up with Dialectic materialism? Nothing? There is no way to protect. And that is why you will find that in the

societies that practice dialectic materialism, they went all out for power. Every individual acquired power because they realised that power alone protects. Hindus are not hypocrites. They are very clear about it. They would say yes power will protect you, wealth will protect you, guns and gold will protect you, but only up to a point. Beyond that, no. Beyond a point only God can protect you. In what way? You accept suffering as also a way of life. You accept suffering also as a gift from God. Because you are not merging into exclusiveness. You are encompassing in inclusiveness. So looking back at this sloka Karika 29, Atman itself becomes the idea which you are holding on to. Those who believe in materialism and those who are sincere believers of materialism, Atman itself has become matter for them. And protects, provided that is his Bhava. Problem is that most of us don't have any Bhava. That is why we suffer. Suffering is because we don't have bhava If we have Bhava, whether you acquired it from teacher, whether you acquired it yourself, The way Ramanuja did and some of these religious stalwarts have done, Gandhiji Bhava of starvation and non-violence, are the values that India has practised for thousands of years,much before Buddha was here, much before Mahaveer Jain was here. And he picked up that value and see what happened. When he was being beaten up by the British, he didn't even raise his hands. That was non-violence. And when he was shot, fatally, he just said Hey Ram. Because he had Rama as his ideal, Bhava. The ideal that you chose, the ideal on which you get established, it is that ideal that protects in life and in death. And it is the Atman itself when seen from the intervening media of mind, it appears as God. You chose God to see in that form, and God now protects you, by actually becoming that. God actually becomes that for you, not for others. Your problem lies with the idea that you think that since God is so and so for you, so God has to be this and you objectify God. Because you don't have a fundamental very basic understanding of God that God is infinite, Why infinite? Because he is not matter, matter energy are always finite. Matter energy they always confine in space. God is by its very definition, by its very nature, is not matter. He is something which is not matter. Mind itself is matter and so he is not mind. God is neither matter, nor mind and nor is God energy. However we came across worshippers of Prana, those who consider Prana to be the ultimate reality. Good himself now appears as Prana. So worshippers of Prana are not wrong. Those who worship trees, those who worship say those local gods are they wrong? Not according to Hinduism, not according to Vedanta. Even for Buddhist, they may be wrong, and for other religions, but not in Hinduism. Because God himself has become that. That is why in India, you will find that every village has its own deity. Simply because you get identified with that deity and you think so much of that deity, that deity who is now God and it is that deity that takes you in life and in death Because actually God protects you. That is what Sri Krishna also says in Gita that I have become all this. I will protect. But because you are thinking on the finite, you will end up being finite. If you think of God as matter, if you

think of supreme reality as matter, you will end up dying as matter. Your soul will be there, your ultimate consciousness will be there and you will merge in that and then finally because that itself is finite it will be destroyed and you will be resurrected and you will have to go through that cycle again. So why not focus on the infinite? Because they never involve the same. This is what the mother of all philosophies, mother of all mantra sloka say. **यं भावं दर्शनयेद्यस्य तं भावं स तु पश्यति। तं चावति स भूत्वाऽसौ तद्ग्रहः समुपैति तम्**

It is a beautiful sloka and if you can memorise it , if you understand it well for yourself, it will help you a lot. It is an amazing idea. Just imagine the kind of knowledge we had inherited from our ancestors.

24. Beyond delusion

In the earlier chapters, we saw how different people perceive reality differently. Those of you who are well aware of spiritual world, and those of you who have studied Sri Ramakrishna, that is Ramakrishna literature in the form of Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, his biography etc., would know that if you really want to understand the Veda and the Upanishads, and how true they are, you need to have a very good grasp or at least some knowledge of Sri Ramakrishna literature. Personally as far as I am concerned, I am able to understand Gita, Upanishads and Veda simply because I know Ramakrishna literature.

Now, whatever Sri Ramakrishna experienced spiritually, he had not studied them. Even the most simple biography of Sri Ramakrishna reveals that. He was barely educated and had not studied scriptures the way we are studying. And yet he realised each of these truths.

Now when you read Kathamrita, the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, you find three very interesting things, as far as spiritual sayings are concerned.

The most important are what Sri Ramakrishna realised himself and his putting those things in words. Believe me, there simply cannot be a greater scripture than the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. May be the Veda, but this being much more accessible and much more understandable, there is nothing like the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. Second you will find that, once in a while, very rarely, but it is there, he talks from scriptures, not because he knew. But things that he had heard from different Sadhus and Mahatmas, who used to come to Dakshineswar temple and whatever he had heard from here and there. But those things were meant to corroborate what he himself had experienced. This is a very important thing. Third is, at times, although rarely, he would put those ideas through arguments. So these were little but nevertheless these were there.

Now, anyone interested in the study of spirituality, must study the Gospel of Sri Ramkrishna. Better is if you can study in Bengali, Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita. You find that actually it is a treasure house of spiritual realisation not in the sense spiritual wisdom. They are not copied from here and there. There are some sacred books, particularly in other religions, where things are collected from here and there. Not the Gospel. These are always his own realisations. And simply to corroborate these truths, sometimes he says that the Veda talk like this, the Upanishad talk like this, but you may not be able to find those things exactly in the Vedas and Upanishads, simply because Sri Ramakrishna was not a scholar. What he had heard, the way he had heard, he narrated. And lastly the reasoning. Mandukya Karika is exactly that. Gaudapada, either himself or from his Guru, whose name we do not know, realised certain truths, of course not as vast as Sri Ramakrishna definitely, because Sri Ramakrishna had them from spiritual practices through every path which Gaudapada did not. That makes no difference. Monks who belong to Vedanta tradition normally have a thorough knowledge of the Veda and the Upanishad. Gaudapada was no exception. So Gaudapada brings in scriptures, to prove that , and says what I have seen is not only true but is also corroborated by the Veda and the Upanishads. More importantly, he uses arguments. Spiritual realisations, put before the audience, through arguments, is a rarest or rare thing, Never has any world literature has done it.

But in this Mandukya Karika this is extremely important, because basically Gaudapada is talking about his own realisations. He uses Upanishads and sometimes Veda to show that well there is tradition to it. He quotes Veda just to show that there is a spiritual tradition to it. And then you use arguments too. But when you come to the world literature of spirituality, you find two kinds. Exclusive and Inclusive. Exclusive is where you say that I have seen this. This is THE truth, This is THE path. And if you don't believe in my path, off with your head. I will make sure that your head goes off.

Hindu tradition does not go that way. Hindu tradition is inclusive. So Gaudapada has to explain why people see things differently. Why do people see Prana as ultimate? People see Kali and Shiva as ultimate and earlier we discussed how beautifully he writes **यं भावं दर्शनयेद्यस्य तं भावं स तु पश्यति। तं चावति स भूत्वाऽसौ तद्ग्रहः समुपैति तम्** - this is Mother of all philosophies. The understanding that you have, that you got from Guru, that is your worldview and that worldview protects you. Now, why is it that way? For that we need to understand the process of knowledge.

The process of Knowledge is rarely discussed. Process of knowledge is not information.. Process of knowledge is where you know this to be true and why knowledge is important. Because that gives you power. Knowledge liberates you and gives you power. How do you acquire knowledge? Once again, Knowledge and information are two different things.

Information is that which flows into your mind. Stays there, running riot. You cannot make sense of it. You cannot create a pattern out of it. Knowledge is that to be the truth. It gives you power. It liberates you. You can apply it anywhere. When you were a young, studying maybe in classes 6,7 or 8, you memorised formulae, from mathematics, physics and the examples that were given in the books. You try to apply those formulae, but you didn't have the knowledge of that formula. As you grow you know how that knowledge has evolved. How does it happen? The one example that we can use to make the idea clear is the process of crystallisation.

When you want to have a pure crystal of anything, you just go on adding impure crystals to a solvent to make a solution. Say Potassium Permanganate in water. Then as the solution becomes saturated and cannot dissolve any more, you heat the solution and go on adding till no more can be dissolved. Now it is a supersaturated solution. Then you add a pure crystal from outside and start cooling the solution. And crystal formation now starts taking place around that new crystal. The purity of the crystals will now depend on the purity of the external crystal added and will be exactly of that purity. This is akin to stirring and heating the impure information and with external help start getting pure knowledge on whatever information you had.

When I was young, I was reading books. They were all information. And then I had more information. And I used to read all kinds of books, whatever novel, travelogues, anything that appealed to my mind. Because I was thoroughly bored in life. Person who is bored, he collects information. Person who is wise, collects knowledge, collects wisdom. I was a thoroughly bored person and then, I moved around with my teachers. So it was like stirring, like heating and then finally it clicked. It is like this. I understand things. Because I understand, information that I gathered over the years slowly there is that crystal formation. Exactly this is what happens in your social life, cultural life and spiritual life. You need to go on pouring if you do not have formation, do not expect to have a large crystal. Because if you want to have a large crystal, you need to have a lot of information.

Think of Swami Vivekananda. He had studied so much that is why he could give out so much.

Suppose, your teacher, your master is somebody, who believes in Christianity, even he will give you the truth. Now the formation of crystals within you will be strictly according to Christian principles. You can say that how can you stretch the crystallisation to this? It is just my understanding and I am trying to clarify this. How exactly does it happen? This is the process. And this is what Gaudapada is also saying - **यं भावं दर्शनयेद्यस्य**. it is not that your mind is a clean slate and suddenly your teacher comes, writes something and you gain that. It does not happen that way.

Now the next sloka, Karika 30, follows. This is the harmony, mother of all harmony. Earlier it was the mother of all philosophy, now it is the mother of all harmony.

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एतैरेशोऽपृथग्भवैः पृथगेवेति लक्ष्यतः।

एवं यो वेद तत्त्वेन कल्पयेत्सोऽविशङ्कितः ॥ Karika 30॥

This Atman, though non-separate from all these, appears as it were, separate. One who knows this truly imagines (interprets) (the meaning of the Vedas) without hesitation

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This is a beautiful sloka. Atman, the non separate from all these ideas, ideas like Prana and others, appears to be separate. We will explain each of these. And he who truly knows this interprets without any fear the meaning of the Vedas.

There are the Vedas, the four Vedas. You want to interpret. How do you interpret it? I have been working on a small book on Vedas, what exactly are the Vedas? And I had this problem. What would be the central note of my book Named Veda Vihangam? I had this problem. Then finally by God's grace, I got that idea.

What Gaudapada is saying is that Atman is non separate from all the great ideas that we discussed earlier. Some say it is Prana, some say it is mind, some say it is the intellect and like that. Under normal conditions we think that we have a mind, mind is ultimate and there is Atman or soul, these are two different things. Actually they are non-separate. And yet they appear as separate. This is the mystery. And he says, who truly knows it can know the meaning of Vedas. This is the importance of knowledge, the importance of realising truth, there is nothing theoretical about it. You have to know it. Only he who understands that truth, only he can explain the Vedas. You cannot unless you have seen it, unless you have known it. My favourite example which I use very often is of Swami Vivekananda.

While moving through Punjab Swamiji had wonderful vision where an ancient sage was chanting the invocation of Adi Sakti Gayatri (*Oam Ayatu Varade Devi, Tryaksare Brahmvadini, Gayatri Chandasam Mata Brahmyone Namostute |Oam Sri. Gayatryai NamahAvhahyami, Sthapayami, Pujayami, Dhyayami | Tato NamaskaramKaromi. |*), and later on Swamiji was to say that Shankaracharya must have had a vision like this because the Vedas are the national cadence of India. The national music, the national tune. Whole of India is woven around that. That tune. Indian way of life, Indian way of thinking, Indian way of dress, everything is woven around that. For that you have to know. It is Atman alone that appears as mind, appears as intellect, appears as Prana, it appears as Prakriti, it appears as this, it appears as multiple, it appears as whatever you may say, and yet it is the ONE. Which means that those who believe say that Kali being the ultimate or Shiva being the ultimate, Vishnu being the ultimate are absolutely correct. That is why Sri Ramakrishna had no issue with other religions. For that matter, Swami Vivekananda does not have any issue with religions. We don't have any

issue with any other religion. Because we know it is that same Atman who is appearing to a particular Devotee as God of his religion, his belief.

Now if somebody says that Shiva is the ultimate God, we have no issues with it. Absolute truth. But then if you say that Shiva is true, Vishnu is not, then we put a complete cross mark. Can Hindu religion accept other religions? 100% it can. Can Hindus accept Gods and Goddesses of other religions? Of course 100%.

Then how is Hindu religion different from other religions? Other religions are exclusive and say that only we are correct. But Hindus will never say that. They will say this verse that we are discussing, they may not quote this verse because they do not know. But the idea remains the same, **एतैरेशोऽपृथग्भवैः पृथगेवेति लक्ष्यित**: - All the forms of God are actually one.

Yet they appear as different. Vishnu appears different from Shiva, and different from say Kali. Actually they are all one. And what is that? Atman, Sacchidananda. Pure existence. It is the pure existence that appears as Brahma, Vishnu and Maheshwar, and God of other religions too. They won't accept it, not our issue. That is what Gaudapada says, One who knows Atman to be the ultimate truth can explain the Veda. So, actually all these differences that we see, is because of the mind.

God is infinite. Upanishads call that God, Atman or Brahman. When you see through the medium of mind, depending on what kind of crystals you form, **यं भावं दर्शनयेद्यस्य** what guru taught you, is your mind. Then the infinite appears to you as may be mind. Appears to you God of the Christians, Appears to you as Kali. Because there is an intervening medium of mind. What about non-intervention of mind? Then also you will see only Atman and you will not see Atman becoming all these. And you will ridicule them. This is what appears with most people.

The truth according to Gaudapada lies in the fact that Atman alone has become all these. It is not that Atman is not the truth. Atman is the truth no doubt, but Atman alone appears as all this. Nowadays somebody has written of Vijnan Vad. And that idea has been popularised by some people. There is no novelty about it. This is a very old Indian thought. It is the Atman alone that appears as Shiva, Atman alone that appears as everything else. Whether you call it name and form , whether you call this and that, the idea is the same, Idea doesn't go anywhere.

Now while explaining this, Acharya Shankar uses some very important arguments. The first of them is that this idea of non-separate and yet separate is a problem of substratum and superimposition. Think of a desert. Think of the mirage. Desert and mirage actually are one and the same. What is desert is mirage, and mirage is desert. And yet under normal conditions we see mirage in the desert and consider mirage to be the truth. Now all these varieties that we see, various Gods and believed by different people are like waves on the

ocean. Substratum is the ocean and Atman is that Substratum and waves are various Gods. And the emphasis from Acharya Shankar is that any such statement must be corroborated by the Vedas. Plus it must be logically correct. This is where Hindu religion differs from other religions. This is another very important aspect. Other religions will never go to question those statements. Other religions will never try to put arguments. But as you might have seen, Mandukya Karika always put forward arguments to put forward a point. But they are not the ultimate arguments. Because very often they will be using statements from the Vedas, from the Upanishads. So the importance of spiritual tradition coupled with arguments and then your understanding, your realisation becomes truly valid. Third very important thing in this is one who knows the truth is like a mom who has some kids, maybe 3 or 4. The kids may be addressing their mom differently. The people who know that the same mother is being addressed, have no confusion. Similarly, one who knows Atman., one who has proceeded properly, One who knows the importance of the Vedas, knows when we talk of different Gods, they are the same. They are talking about the same thing.

And that is the beauty of Sri Ramakrishna's life. Therein lies the speciality of Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda tradition, that we know this to be the truth, every path, every religious faith is a path, no issues with that. Because not only paths, even if you are saying that this is the ultimate truth there is no issue. For example, think of some aborigines who think of some tree, or some mountain or a stone as the ultimate supreme reality, we have no issues with that. Atman is appearing to that person in that form. Actually this is the Indian thought process. We have absolutely no issues with other religions. Other religions may have issues with us, because we are more Catholic, we are broad. They are not. Sometimes when people come attacking through their comments on you tube channel, my general reply is that your comments reek of complex. What complex , that I don't say. It is through this attitude, through this understanding, that the Vedas talk of Ekam Sat Vipra Bahudha Vadanti - Truth is one sages call it variously. Mahabharata , in the beginning itself says, if a person is not well versed, in Itihasa, purana tradition that is Mahabaharata and Purana, Vedas get scared of this person thinking that this person will kill and harm me. Such a beautiful expression. Unless you have the knowledge of the whole, knowledge of the complete, shouldn't get down to expressing the Vedas, should not get down to explaining the Upanishads.

First Mandukya very clearly says that these are the different theories, and then it harmonises. So the ultimate of synthesis is what we find here. And remember that real strength in life, real power in life comes only when you have realised the truth, only when you have knowledge. Knowledge is everything. Knowledge gives you power, knowledge gives you everything. The Vedas are knowledge. And how do you understand the Vedas? Through a comprehensive approach, by taking the whole or if you have the realisation that

Atman alone appears as different things to different mindsets. Actually, Atman is not taking up something like an actor's dress. It is the mind of the person, the colouring of the mind, the limitation of the mind, that makes a person see Atman that way. We move over to the next sloka, Karika 31.

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स्वप्नमाये यथा दृष्टे गंधर्वनगरं यथा।

तथा विश्वमिदं दृष्टं वेदान्तेषु विचक्षणैः ॥ Karika 31॥

As are dreams and illusions or a castle in the air seen in the sky, so is the universe viewed by the wise in the Vedanta

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Person who has seen Atman, Person who has realised Atman, Person who is going all out with this Sadhana in Vedantic tradition, how he perceives this world? They say as dreams, illusions and castles in the air, like mirage are viewed, so is the tangible universe viewed by the wise, well versed in Vedanta. One who is well versed in Vedanta, one knows the Vedantic truth, he looks at this universe in the same way that a common man, person like me and you view dreams, Illusions, Castles in the air as they are true while watching them. They are no more true when you move away from them. This is the ultimate of Vedanta. It is all a big illusion. But not an illusion in the sense that we understand. Illusions in the sense that these do not have the ultimate reality. Because there is a fundamental difference between ultimate reality and relative reality. Illusion is something entirely different. For the want of better words, they use the word illusion and to give us examples.

Thing is, your hunger is satiated, with the food supplied in the dream, but not when you are up. Just like that, the wise, who know Vedanta, till they were with the universe, his needs, his requirements were fully satisfied. But now no more.Now he has moved on. One of my brother monks said Mandukya Karika does not fascinate him. Why? He gave this idea that once I apply this knowledge, that this world is like an illusion,and I will not be able to work. I laughed. I said it is the other way round. When you know it is an illusion, when you know it is all play, you can plunge into it with the fullest force, you have nothing to lose, because you know it is all play. You can plunge into it with the fullest force, because you have nothing to lose. You know it is all play. You know it is all Magical game. Why bother? You have nothing to lose. You have nothing to gain. When you have nothing to lose or gain in life, so much the better. You become a master. All the great sports persons, all the great performers, all the great writers, all the great actors all have this thing in common. They are not worried about results. Maybe initially they were. Now no more. Now they are into the game. They give the whole of it because they know that another game awaits them.

Now this verse is very simple and just the conclusion of the discussion. And its ultimate conclusion comes in the next verse, Karika 32. It is a beautiful and one of the most

interesting verses that is there in the Upanishads and in the Vedantic tradition. If you go to Uttarakhand most monks keep this sloka memorised and they quote

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न निरोधो न चोत्पत्तिर्न बद्धो न च साधकः।

न मुमुक्षुर्न वै मुक्त इत्येष परमार्थता ॥ Karika 32॥

There is no dissolution, no birth, none in bondage, none aspiring for wisdom, no seeker of liberation and none liberated . This is the absolute tradition.

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This is the ultimate of Vedanta. Cannot think of, cannot dream of something, higher than this. If this be the truth, that is what Gaudapada has and he kept on building and ultimately he has come to the pinnacle where there is a single point and that single point, the weight of the entire universe is balanced. This locates the centre of gravity of the spiritual universe.This whole universe can be balanced on a single point. If you can locate its centre of gravity. The centre of gravity of the entire creation, not of this universe, the subtle universe, the gross universe and the causal universe. Everything that is there in the creation can be balanced on this single point, sharp point of the needle. **न निरोधो न चोत्पत्तिर्न बद्धो न च साधकः। न मुमुक्षुर्न वै मुक्त इत्येष परमार्थता ॥** Meaning is, there is neither dissolution, there is no creation, no one is in bondage and no one is practising disciplines. There is no one seeking liberation and no one is liberated. This is the absolute truth. There is no birth, no death. no creation no dissolution. No one is practising spiritual disciplines. No one is trying to get liberated. And no one has ever been liberated. Can you imagine? This is enough to shock. There is no bondage, there is no immortality, there is no one struggling, there is no spiritual practices, there is neither creation, there will never be, ever be ,any dissolution. This is too much to digest. Yet this is the truth. Truth reiterated by hundreds of saints in the Indian traditions . Ultimate truth is this. The absolute truth is this. This verse no 32. Actually those who write the sloka etc, no one is there. You can find these slokas easily on the net. There is neither dissolution, no creation, no one is under bondage, you are not under bondage, you were never under bondage and no one is a spiritual struggler, no one is trying to seek liberation, no one was ever liberated. You can imagine the kind of ultimate things. This is Vedanta and most people when they talk about Vedanta they talk about this attitude, without understanding., fortunately. Their disciples are like that. This requires some discussion. We will try to make the idea clear.

First thing is, whatever Gaudapada is saying in Mandukya Karika, is straight from realisation, what he has seen, and corroborated by the Vedas. And made strong by arguments. Arguments have been going on from the beginning. Naturally it is not possible to explain in one sentence. Essentially this verse sums up the entire chapter. Let me tell the salient point concerning this sloka.

Now, when duality is perceived as illusory on Atmann, as Gaudapada explained that everything is actually Atman. And every other knowledge is basically illusory. Then what happens is that all our experiences, every experience that we have, whatever experience, even the study of the Vedas, whether the experience be of secular nature, worldly nature or of the religious nature, they all belong to the realm of mind. To keep it very simple there is this world of mind, and there is the realm beyond mind. Upanishads are talking about realm beyond mind. Everything that we know till date belongs to the empires of mind. Birth is in the empire of mind, death is in the empire of mind, creation is in the empire of mind, dissolution is in the empire of mind. Study of the Vedas belong to the empire of mind. Every religion, every God, every perception belongs to the empire of mind. And that is why , Hindu religion is the only religion that says that even the study of the Vedas belong to Apara Vidya, the lower knowledge. Para Vidya, supreme knowledge is that which takes one to Atman.
We cannot comment, shouldn't be commenting on other religions. But we can conclude what we mean to say. But as far as other religions are concerned, they cannot understand these things. Because they are not trained that way. For them, what they know is the truth, And we know why they think like this. What they are discussing is within the mind. Whole of science, when they are discussing the problems of consciousness, are within the mind.
Of late some scientists are saying that the earth is a living thing. We know it for long. And it is an ancient Greek theory where they talk about earth as Gaia (the goddess of the Earth and the mother of all life:), where it is a living entity. Suddenly scientists mix up something from the old manuscripts, old ideas and come up to get some recognition and something. We have known it all along. Most Puranas begin with that earth takes up the form of a cow and goes to Brahma and says I cannot hold this weight. Do something to reduce this weight. However, whatever science discusses belongs completely to the empire of the mind. So whether you are doing spiritual practices, whether you are worshipping God, whatever God that be, whether we are into Vedas or into scriptures, it is all within the mind. You cannot go beyond mind. So this perceiving of dissolution and perceiving of creation when you are discussing creation, when you are perceiving dissolution, perceiving is the most important thing, and perceiving means mind. It means creation and dissolution belong to mind. So there is no creation, no dissolution from the standpoint of Atman. In Veda we have Nasadiya Sukta, you can listen to that. You can see our playlist for this.There it says,in the beginning there was neither existence nor non-existence, no realm, no sky, no air, no earth. There was neither mortality nor immortality. Neither there was existence that can be perceived through mind, nor non-existence. Because Non-existence is also perceived through the mind. So all these dualities, dualities like birth and death, dualities like discipleship and gurushipp, dualities like struggling for spirituality, struggling for liberation and struggling for worldly

things, these are all dualities. They all belong to the mind. So now, how can you say that there is neither creation, nor dissolution? Sounds so absurd. We are so conscious of creation and dissolution. Well it is not about creation and dissolution, it is about duality. There is no duality of whatsoever kind. Kathopnishad also says there is no multiplicity, and every duality is a mental state. This has been going on from the first mantra that we discussed. Every duality is ultimately from the mind. It all belongs to the subjective realm. There is no objectivity involved in it. This is what has been shown through the whole of Mandukya Karika. Everytime you think of duality, you have to bring in mind. So the simplest thing that can be said in its favour is that when there is deep sleep, one does not perceive duality. And when one is in Samadhi, one does not perceive duality. As far as deep sleep is concerned, we all know. As far as Samadhi is concerned we have the words of the masters. The most authentic words come from Sri Ramakrishna, where he said, when he was doing Advaita Sadhana, Mother Kali was appearing before him. That means there was a duality between him and Mother Kali. There was nothing else. Ultimately he had to cut her and his mind went into the realm of the absolute, where there was no duality. And if you find that this non-duality is a spiritual thing, experienced by the masters, you also find a shadow of it, a shadow of absence of duality we experience practically everyday during deep sleep. Then you will realise that yes, there are moments where there is no duality. Of course dualists, those who belong to the Madhwa school of thought, come up with their points. Why argue? We have it from the authority of the Upanishads. We have this from the authority of Sri Ramakrishna. So what is there to argue about? You have greater talent and naturally you can put me down. But that does not change the reality. That does not change the truth.
So then naturally the conclusion becomes Shunyavad of the Biddhists. There is nothing. Acharya Shankar is commenting No, it is not possible. Because unless there is one substratum, you cannot have any imagination. So there has to be something. What if the substratum is also unreal? Beautiful argument, What is substratum is unreal. That means you are talking about snake and the rope. You say that snake is the unreal. What if the rope is unreal? One of our monks used to tell jokingly . People say Brahma satya, Jagat mithya, supposing it is the other way round. Jagat Satya Brahma mithya? Then what happens. Like if there is a rope, if there is a snake and you mistake it for rope, then what happens? That is an analogy. It doesn't happen in Vedanta.
In Vedanta they will say that consciousness precedes imagination. Very important statement. Consciousness precedes imagination, If you imagine something, there has to be a consciousness. It is not about confusing between snake and rope. Consciousness and imagination. For every imagination you need consciousness. And what Vedanta talks about is to get rid of imagination and focus on consciousness. Nothing else. So you cannot say that consciousness is unreal. if you say that there is no consciousness as the Shunyavadis

say, that is not tenable. Because if you say that there is no substratum, substratum is also also unreal, to say that, you need to have a sense of “I”. The moment you bring in sense of “I” to negate “I”-ness, there also you need “I”. Thus you cannot say that it is all Shunya. Unfortunately later critics of Advaita, started telling that Shankaracharya is Prachchhanna Bouddha - a buddhist in a mask.

It is not that. Critics will come up with any argument. Again in India you will find that Hinduism is attacked by everybody. And they come up with weird arguments.

So how can you remove the idea of duality from my mind? Actually you might have noted that the non-dual state is not explained. For example if you go through any of the Bhakti schools, suppose you go to a church, they will go on talking about God is like this,God is like that, although their God is just like a person with certain qualities. Similarly. Vaishnavas, when they talk about Krishna or Vishnu they will go on talking about qualities. And you can imagine. But in Advaita, they cannot. Say you cannot talk about Advaita, how can I get rid of duality? Acharya Shankara says beautifully, Duality is superimposed, Atman is the reality. Atman is reality, something which is known by everybody by the sense of I exist, I sleep, I eat, sense of “I”-ness is there, that which is evident, that which is self evident, why do you need scriptures to tell that? It is a phenomenal argument. Why do I need to prove that I have this hand or that I am putting on this shirt? It is self evident to me. That I have a body is self-evident to me under normal conditions. Scriptures are meant to teach you something which is not self-evident. Duality is self-evident. I keep saying that me and this pen are different, for this I don't need scriptures. I know. I am different from this pen So why do we need duality? When you read scriptures, when you read the Vedas, when you read Upanishads, you study them to know something that cannot be known through ordinary perception,through ordinary reasoning. So Atman is known all along as ”I”. Duality as superimposition is not known. Because we consider duality to be the truth. Scriptures , Upanishads remove the ideas of duality. It is like you have put on the blinkers, Guru comes on and removes your blinkers. You can see clearly. You could see all along but you had put on blinkers. Sometimes you know, young kids, 4.5 years old, get confused about something and they start shouting and crying. Their mom comes and clarifies that it is like this. Oh! I thought it was like this, the kid would say. It is like that. We have put on stoppers, we have put on blinkers and we complain that we are not able to see. Duality is like that. Superimposition. What the scriptures do, what the Guru does is to remove those blinkers and show us the truth which is self-evident and which was all along there. So is there no birth,no death? it is very much there for everyone who is within the mind. Once you realise the truth, once you come to know the self-evident truth, you realise neither there was birth, nor there was death. Nor there was creation, nor there was dissolution. Neither there was a struggle for liberation, nor there was any liberation , because you were never under bondage. You are always free. If you are

always free, where comes the question of getting liberated. So Atman does not realise its own natural condition. This is the problem. The problem with us, the problem with this world is we don't realise our natural condition. We always see ourselves as "I" plus something. What do the Upanishads do? They remove that Plus something and you become what you are. And all these ideas of I am happy, I am sad, I am this these superimpositions are removed by these scriptures. So when these scriptures are telling that Atman is the reality, what they actually mean to say is that superimposition that you are adding on yourself, get rid of it which in any case you get rid of during your deep sleep.

So you have some idea, not that you don't have any idea, and look at the great sages who see the same truth. When somebody was talking to Sri Ramakrishna, Sri Ramakrishna said, think who you are? Are you the body? Are you the mind? What are you? Just think and you will realise that these are all superimpositions.

So this way we find that whatever has been discussed here, it refutes the idealism of the western philosophy where mind is everything. It also refuse the Kantian view where he talks about mind and something "thing" in itself, because according to Vedanta, mind is false. Mind does not exist and objects do not exist. Kant used to talk about "objects" in itself. Object has its own reality. Vedanta does not accept this. So Vedanta is neither near Kant nor it is idealistic. Either way. So every imagination that we are having of happiness, sadness, it is all because the perceiver is there. I am thar perceiver. So whatever process you may take, whatever example you may take, whatever experience you may take, there is simply no way that you can get out of the perceiver. So Vedanta is neither Shunyabad of Buddhists, nor it is idealist. Nor is it rationalist. Nor does it follow objectivism. Nor is it Kantian, nor is it Hegelian. Vedanta is Vedanta where Atman alone exists.

25. When fear ceases to exist

In this chapter we shall take up Karika 33 which is about what self knowledge really implies. What is the meaning of self knowledge and then continues with what exactly happens if you get established in self knowledge.

But before that we need to have a recapitulation of what we discussed in the preceding two chapters .

A very important point is what people conclude about ultimate reality. People think that ultimate reality is nothingness, people think that ultimate reality is Prana, ultimate reality is mind, intellect etc. and then Gaudapada, the great teacher said that Atman alone appears as all those things. And depending on what you learn from your teacher, depending on the

attitude that you have, you accept that particular thing as the ultimate reality. So the first thing to remember based on what we discussed is that ultimate reality is perceived differently by different people not because of miscomprehension, but because Atman appears to them in that way. So we cannot say they are wrong.This is like looking through a coloured glass and the object appears in that color. Similarly when we look at Atman with the coloured glass, say of Prana being the ultimate, we will see that. Again In different religions God is perceived differently. But how can God be different? Well God has to be different. Because the mind that is perceiving is different. They are coloured. So that was the first point which we have already discussed in detail.

And then, starting from the first Upanishad Mantra that we had, the conclusion is that actually Atman is substratum of everything. Appearance, whatever appearance is there, is because Atman is there. If Ata]man were not there then these things would not have appeared. And in that way Buddhist philosophy is contradicted. Because in Buddhism, the ultimate is shunya, nothing exists. And we discussed why Buddhists say that way and why Vedanta says this way. And from there we came up with ,there is no creation,there is no dissolution, there is no birth and no death. There Is an interesting argument in Hindu tradition which says that the moment you say that something is born, the moment you say that something is destroyed, it means that thing has to exist and existence according to Vedanta always means that which can never be destroyed. That which is eternal and this is what we have been studying from day one. Anything which is changing its form is not eternal. So actually Upanishads are this search for the eternal. In the Kathopanishad - we have this talk on Youtube, which you may listen, there is a beautiful mantra, नित्योऽनित्यानां चेतनश्चेतनानाम्, एको बहूनां यो विदधाति कामान् **(**Nityoanityanam,chetanaschenanam, eko Bahunam yo vidadhati kaman)' the search in the Upanishads, my search, your search is of the eternal amidst non-eternal. Mandukya Karika goes one step further and shows how non-eternal actually never exists, because it was never born. The moment it is born, what can take birth? That which exists. But anything, the normal thing that we understand about birth is that a baby is born, we know that baby is continuously changing, so it does not actually have any existence.

It has also been shown how anything that is changing is actually a mental phenomena. Only real, if it exists, you can create it, you can destroy it.

Governments sometimes stop one project and say the money is saved. This has been shown in the British TV serial, "Yes Minister", where this has been taunted. There a secretary dissuades the minister to stop a project where new jobs will be created. When the minister asks, what about the fact that he has already announced the project? The secretary says you have saved money, by not giving the employment. So there was neither any money, nor any expenditure and nor was there any saving. It was all imaginary. The

expenditure was imagined so is the saving. You cannot have imaginary money. You can spend only real money. You cannot spend imaginary money. Similarly only a real thing can be produced and only a real thing can be destroyed.

The argument here is that these objects are not real, real means that which exists eternally. And then we had this discussion on how Vedanta differs from realism, it also differs from idealism, because according to idealism everything is in the mind. But in Vedanta, the mind itself does not exist because it does not have any absolute existence. It is not absolutely real. So Vedanta is not idealism and definitely not realism. Similarly, the view of Kant, we discussed in previous talk, where it says objects are “things” in itself,whatever he might have meant by it. The intellectuals and intelligent people can come up with brilliant ideas, which we ordinary people will never understand. It is like modern science. Modern science people are always coming up with theories and we don't even know what these theories mean and after some days we hear that the same theory has been contradicted. Everything is just a brain exercise. You come up with a theory, you develop a theory and then you contradict that. We understand neither of these. So Kant was something like that and came out with ideas of “things” in itself. And that thing in itself is unknowable. Because only that object can know. We cannot know an object. Now because objects are non-existent, we do not accept even the theory of Kant. So, if you go from the non-dual stand point we have discussed these things and we are just recapitulating the entire thing. Things that are non-existent cannot be produced and so they cannot have any effect. And Vedanta is not one with Buddhism because, in Buddhism everything is annihilated. Shunya. Gaudapada says that when you say that nothing exists, there also your “I”-ness continues to exist. So you cannot say that it is all Shunya. And at the same time, any duality is an illusion. From the standpoint of Advaita, every duality is an illusion. So, whatever duality you come up with, Vedanta does not accept that. But most importantly, scriptures that do not teach Atman, see there is a popular mis-conception that Atman is taught by the Upanishads. It is not that. The subject matter of Upanishad is Atman. But the way, say our Vishanavas say Krishna is the supreme God, Vedanta do not teach Atman in that way. Because Atman cannot be taught. There is no teacher, no disciple, there is no subject matter. Because Atman exists eternally. The moment you bring any other object there, duality comes. And Advaita that we are studying, is something very deep. And it will be very difficult for you to grasp certain things, but I tried to present things in the simplest possible way. Without compromising with the subject matter. I do not compromise with the truth.

Everyone is very clear that he exists. Everyone has an idea of “I”-nes . But the understanding of this “I”-ness is flawed. What the Upanishads do is to remove those layers of flaws. Once those layers are removed, what happens? Nothing! Nothing changes. It is only your perception, your understanding of “I” changes. Nothing else. Suppose tomorrow

some prophet comes and comes up with some new God, huge number of Gods that we have, suppose he says that well, if you listen to my God, you will have this this this, whatever might they be. If you do not listen, the consequences will be this this and this. Now what happens you move from point to another. Suppose, I were to adopt that philosophy , then I give up this philosophy and accept that philosophy. So there is a lateral movement. That is what happens. Not only that if you are following Christianity , they believe that they are sinners, and they have to go on asking for forgiveness, some act is required. And that forgiveness will take them to heaven. You can see how there is movement.

Vedanta says nothing like that. You are here and you went nowhere, you will go nowhere, nothing. Whatever it is, it is an illusion. It is a game being played out in front of you. You are watching a movie and you get too involved in that movie. You smile with the characters, you shed tears with those characters. And if you forget that you exist just like that, somebody comes and reminds you. When you have lived with something for too long you forget your identity then you start living a different life.

So that is what we wanted to recapitulate. Now We begin Karika no 33.

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भावैरसद्भिरेवायमद्वयेन च कल्पितः ।

भावा अप्यद्वयेनैव तस्माददद्वयता शिवा ॥ Karika 33॥

This (the Atman) is imagined both as unreal objects that are perceived as the non-duality. The objects (Bhavas) are imagined in the non-duality itself. Therefore non-duality (alone) is the (highest) bliss.

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Atman is imagined as unreal, like Prana etc. When you say that this is the real thing, actually unreal things are being imagined on Atman and Atman appears as if it has become those things. So Atman is imagined as the unreal objects that are now perceived to exist and as non-duality. They appear as non-dual. They appear as ultimate reality. The objects too are imagined in the non-dual Atman. The objects such as that, are imagined non-dual Atman. Therefore non-duality is bliss.

What Gaudapada says here is that, Atman is the ultimate reality and yet you imagine prana to be the ultimate reality, or mind to be the ultimate reality. Mind, like for example, consider today's mind to be conscious. So when persons like Roger Penrose and all, were discussing the mind as being the ultimate consciousness, they are imagining the mind to be consciousness. Consciousness is Atman. Now the way these supreme realities are being imagined, just like that the objects are also being imagined. Here is this Pen and I imagine this pen as non-dual Atman. If the objects don't exist, that means if non-duality is the only truth, then that is Shiva. Shiva means bliss. Once you can realise that Advaita is the ultimate reality, you will have only bliss and bliss.

This needs a little explanation. It is very simple, nothing complicated. Acharya Shankar explains it very beautifully. We are now moving away from that ultimate reality thing and coming to the objects. Any object that you can think of, has a changing nature, It was born, it got transformed and it got destroyed. What are objects actually? Objects are nothing but activities of the mind. Because when you sleep, you are not aware of the objects. When you go into deep sleep, you are not aware of the objects. Forget samadhi, let us not go into Samadhi. But when you are dreaming you are not away from the objective world. Which means objects exist only till your mind is active as far as that object is concerned. This is actually a very simple argument but extremely profound. Raja Yog talks are there, you can find the playlist in english, and these are authentic talks. Raja Yog puts it very beautifully, “Vritti Sarupyam Itaratra" - when someone is not in self-realization, the seer takes on the identity of the fluctuations of the mind. This means that when someone is wrapped up in their thoughts and unable to stay present, they become their thoughts. The self identifies itself with the thought process. The activities of the brain. Activities of the mind. Whenever we are talking about something, whenever we are watching something, listening to something, whether you are hearing your own words , words from inside, words from outside, whatever may be, it is all mental activity. Objects are just mental activity. And it has been shown earlier mind is actually non-differnt from Atman. Mind does not have any separate existence because if mind has a separate existence, then as we showed earlier, Vedanta will become idealistic from the western sense of Philosophy, and Vedanta is not idealism.

So Gaudapada has taken the entire Upanishad, that is the twelve mantras and so many Karikas to show how Atman and mind are two different things and mind does not have any existence. Any object, awareness of any object is a pure mental activity. Acharya Shankar explains that when you have this problem of illusion, when for example you take a rope for a snake, when you see that snake, it is a mental activity and when you see that rope, that is also a mental activity. Everything is mental activity. The illusion of the snake was by mind so the snake took birth in the mind, it continued to exist in the mind and it ultimately got dissolved in the mind. Did this snake really exist? Definitely! It existed for you till it was there. And you could see whether you saw that as a snake or you saw that as a water line, or whatever you saw, it was all a product of your mind. Just like that, this entire world is perceived, not only perceived, it is created by the mind. We have discussed these things earlier too. Because the mind is active, because there is mental activity, that is why there is this world. There is no other reason. So, since the objects are perceivable, we perceive those objects only in an active mind, not in the passive mind. What does it imply? Objects do not exist. But it has a devastating conclusion. Anything that is worked out by mind is actually false. Whether that be an object or that be an ideal. So when you say that Aham Brahmasmi, I am Brahman, even that is false. Because it is a mental activity. When you say

that God exists, it is a mental activity and so it is false. This is the true Vedanta. Vedanta does not accept all such hocus pocus. It will not accept that the world does not exist, but Brahman exists. No! That you are telling Brahman exists is false, because your mind is working there. You say that God alone is the truth as some religions say - My God is true. That is also an illusion. Because anything coming out of mind is illusion from the ultimate standpoint. This has a very hilarious implication for religion.

What we are studying here, Mandukya Karika, is pure Advaita Vedanta and this is something very difficult to grasp. Those of you who are really interested in understanding Advait Vedanta, I would request you to read the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. If you read the Gospel, this idea of Advaita and mental activities, these things become clear. Since we are aware of this world, that is why we have to go on doing certain things. The Sanskrit term for this is Upacharamatra. Just carrying out something. That doesn't make your behaviour as something real. Nor does it make this world real. Yet these things have to be done because others do not realise that. However as far as the ultimate reality is concerned, for example Sri Ramakrishna is continuously talking about Advaitam. And that is a state which you must have experienced. But the moment you say Advaita, the moment you say I am Brahman, you are telling a lie. But why? That is elaborated through Sri Ramakrishna's words during his discussions with Vidyasagar.

Pandit Iswar Chandra Vidyasagar was a very famous person during the time of Sri Ramakrishna. He was a great Sanskrit Scholar, educationist and a social reformer.. Sri Ramakrishna once went to meet him. And they were discussing. Sri Ramakrishna said Brahman is the only thing that has not been soiled, defiled by mouth. Idea is that nobody has ever succeeded in uttering the word Brahman. Even when I was a young monk, I could not understand what Sri Ramakrishna meant. It was much later that I realised that when you speak something, say I say Pen, I first form an idea of this Pen in my mind. Then this mind sends the signal to different organs. And my speech organ utters the word Pen. Because me and you we are both connected by this word, as far as this object is concerned So if I say something else you will not understand., Kids have their own words for different things, different words.. Others do not understand. Twins talk in their own language, their own code language, others do not understand that. Now when you are communicating the words have to be common, so that me and you understand. So first mind has to grasp it. Now Brahman is something that the mind cannot grasp. So when you say Aham Brahmasmi, I am Brahman, it is ridiculous.

It was shown how the mind has no independent existence beyond Atman. In the case of Sri Ramkrishna it was his direct experience, no questions can be asked and there cannot be any doubt.

Here comes the practical implication of Advaita. We have done with the theoretical side, we have done with the complicated aspects of Advaita. If you follow some religion, whatever it may be, Buddhism or Islam or Christianity, they have something to offer to you. They say you will go to heaven If you do good work. In Hinduism also they say that if you lead a religious life, if you perform Yajnas, if you worship this God, that God, you will go to heaven. But what do I gain if I go for Advaita? Advaita that cannot be taught by any scriptures. This is point number one And the point number two is , even if I say Advaita, I am becoming a liar. Advaita is something which is not meant only for words. It is meant for realisation. Sri Ramakrishna has repeatedly criticised telling Soham Soham without realisation. Till you are going all out on this, to realise this, having learnt it from a proper teacher, you should not be talking about this. So when one goes to learn Advaita, what is there to gain? It is getting rid of fear. Advaita teaches you to overcome fear.

Fear is the most compelling force in this world. There are many kinds of emotions, and the six most powerful emotions are Kama (lust), Krodha (anger), Lov (greed), Moha (delusion, attachment), Mada (Pride, arrogance) , Matsarya (jealousy). Religion has this characteristic. it shows you the temptation of heaven, there are beautiful women waiting for you. There will be beautiful trees, streams running etc. as carrot, and if you don't listen you go to hell, that is the stick. God loves you, Jesus loves you and if you do not love back, like a jealous jilted lover throws acid on your face, God sends you to hell.

Vedanta does not go that way. If you don't practice Advaita, you are and will continue to be immersed in fear. Why do you want to get something because you are afraid that if you don’t have that, you will not be happy. We talk about pleasure and pain, these are all works of mind. People say that everything is in the mind. Do they practice it? No they don’t. Why? They cannot. But ultimately if you analyse yourself, every emotion, every emotion that we have, is actually goaded by fear., We are forced forward by only one emotion, that is fear. Communists put the fear of the bourgeoisie in the mind of the proletariat and class struggle begins. Every revolution is caused because there is some kind of fear. We are greedy, because we are afraid. Swamiji mentions one beautiful example of America. There was a person, very rich and he committed suicide, because he had now only one million dollars left. And Swamiji says that here is this person for him one million dollars is nothing. He felt that he is now poor and committed suicide. So he is scared that society will not recognise him, now that he is left with just one million dollars. But for you and me, it is a very huge amount. So ultimately it is fear that makes you work, it is fear that makes you greedy, it is fear that makes you lustful. Ultimately it is fear. Where does this fear come from? From objects. You think that there are two, you think you think you are separate and that is why you have this suffering. We have fear because we see that duality. We are scared of God that He may send me to hell. Why? Because you see God separate from you and you see

hell separate from you. You are scared of your enemy because you see two. Gautam Buddha,never saw two, he never had any problem. Advaita has only one thing to offer. You can overcome your fears, not just overcome, your fear will be gone forever, because you realise that you alone exist. There is a very beautiful story in one of the Upanishads. It is that, during creation, God became self aware and then He started crying out of fear. Then He thought, since I am alone, whom should I be afraid of?

Now it is not that I just think that Advaita is the truth, So I will not be scared of anything. No it is not that. You need to be established in that. Because when you say that I don't want to be scared, I don't want to be afraid, once again mind comes into play, you identify yourself with the body, you identify yourself with the mind. That is the trap. Advaita is not something which can be discussed merely theoretically. It is not something like one of those positivist talks. It is not a motivational talk. It is something that you need to realise. It is a state where you remove all your trappings. There is no covering left. Then you realise the truth. So according to Upanishads, according to Vedanta, fearlessness is the ultimate good. You don't have to be scared of hell, for that you must also lust for heaven. You must also get out of this identification with the body. I hope I have made the idea clear. I am not very sure, because these are bit subtle things.

So, **अप्यद्वयेनैव तस्माददद्वयता शिवा** - Advaita itself is Abhaya that is fearlessness. What Advaita offers is fearlessness. Makes you fearless. We talk a lot nowadays with Youtube and other media. And there was, I think the gentleman is still alive, one doctor, talking a lot about Advaita. He was once giving talks at the Taj Hotel in Mumbai. Some young people had gone to attend. When they came out, some newspapermen asked them about his teachings. They said he talks great and taught them Aham Brahmasmi. On reading this in the newspaper, I was laughing. My God, you are talking about Advaita in a five star hotel! Who can attend ? Only very rich people. Actually, those who attended paid a lot of money. And you are teaching them you are Brahman! Can there be a bigger fraud than this? You are teaching Advaita and making money, minting money out of it? You call yourself Advaita Guru? Hypocrisy should have a limit in religion. In Advaita you cannot have any hypocrisy. Hypocrisy has no place in Advaita. In religion you can have, but not in Advaita, never. So, Karika says **तस्माददद्वयता शिवा** - Auspicious, Advaita alone is something that is Auspicious. It gives you peace, you go beyond any kind of fear. So you are established in fearlessness. You go beyond sorrow, you go beyond delusion. Go beyond all that. To your mind you might say that OK fine, if I cannot be in Advaita and if speaking of Advaita is kind of hypocrisy, then why should I practice it? So let me go back to one of the statements that I heard from one of my teachers. I was actually lucky to have many teachers, that is one advantage of the organisation where you meet many great personalities. In earlier times there used to be only

one teacher, only one guru, but now with the organisation we interact with many. Shrimad Swami Mokshadananda Maharaj, Ram Maharaj as he was known, I learnt a lot from him. And he used to tell me often, I was pretty young then and was unable to understand all these. He used to say if you get established in Advaita, you will be behaving in a certain way. Not being afraid is one of them. Not being deluded by sorrow, not being deluded by grief, these are also part of that same thinking. Not discriminating, that is also part of it. He told me to practice all these in daily life. Because practicing something you can do it even now. And once you are established in that practice, it will be the same as having that knowledge. As far actual realisation is concerned, actual seeing is concerned that depends on God and that may take time. So why bother? It may not be possible for me, for you to practice everything that is a direct corollary of, direct effect of Advaita. But you can practice it. You can practice most of it. And as you start practicing, you become blessed. You can come out of your worries, you can come out of tension.

Many studies have been conducted to show that people who practice religion are happier. It has been conclusively proven many times. Now a person believing in God, when in trouble will say God is in charge so what to worry. As if sometime God is in charge and in other times God is not in charge. God is incharge all the time. Thing is do you believe in God? If you believe in God, it gives you strength. When there was this Iraq america war one of the American soldiers was killed. His wife reminisced that she did not believe in God. She was an Atheist. But her husband, the soldier who died, was a believer in God. And they had a small kid of five or six. He had inherited the belief of God from his father. When the news came that the Soldier had died, there were tears and lots of things happened. After some months one day that kid pointed at a star and told his mom, see my dad is there. And that is when this lady decided to write her reminiscence. She said that she suddenly realised that her son was believer in God was more at peace with the death of his father than I was. Atheists are never at peace. The believers are generally at peace. Now what about Advaitins? They are greatest at being in peace. Try and practice it. We have our talks on Isopanishad in the play list. Beautifully says, if you realise this oneness, If you see that divine oneness, how can sorrow ever touch you? How can any kind of delusion, that is born of expectation can touch you? When one country attacks another country, one country carpet bombs another country, why? Because they never believe in the fact that the universe is one. See a few days ago suddenly one news item is there regarding science. Scientists have worked out the family history of the previous one lakh years. Says that it is all coming from one particular family in Africa. I loved it. Will the Americans who enslaved the African people and brought them to America as slaves agree that they are their own brothers and sisters? And will they rethink considering the history? It will be devastating for them. Will these Europeans who have a snobbish attitude towards everyone agree? That these

Africans are their own. We Indians don't have any issues. We say that Vasudaiva Kutumbakam, we are all one. Will these Communists say that Bourgeoisie and Proletariat are all one? They will not. Because you see, unless you have reached the level of true spirituality, which comes from Advaita you can not practice this kind of oneness. You just cannot. This problem of differentiation, this problem of you and I being separate, comes simply from the idea of duality. And it all began with the Jews who came up with this idea that they are the chosen people of God. Then it was taken up by Christianity and then by Islam. Chosen people of God. If you don't believe it then let us settle it with a good fight. Let's fight it out, who is the chosen of the God. Very important point to keep in mind, when you are theoretically talking about Advaita being the ultimate, even that is a delusion. However that being the truth as told by the Upanishads, as realised by the greatest of the sages you can start practicing by non-differentiating. Don't carry a superior attitude , don't carry airs about you. That will help us lead a far more improved life. And the world will be a better place.

26. Living an auspicious life

We continue to discuss Vaitathya Prakarana where Gaudapada is trying to remove all ideas of illusion. Illusion that is there in our mind, illusion that is all around us.

When we were young monks, all these things were new for us and we used to hear very funny words about Vedanta. People used to say "বেদান্তের কচকচানি" - Vedanter kachkachani, which is "cracklings of Vedanta". When something is put in hot oil for frying this crackling sound comes. Personally I used to find the expression extremely interesting and extremely funny because it is in the nature of the unlearned to make fun of the learned. It is in the nature of the uncultured to make fun of the cultured. Culture requires struggle, learning requires struggle. People who have not struggled, make fun of them,because somewhere they want to bring them down. So this expression amongst the monks, the cracklings of Vedanta, the noise of Vedanta, meaningless noise of Vedanta, seemed funny to me.

I did not understand Vedanta but I loved the use of the derogatory expressions concerning Vedanta. And like most of you, or most of my monastic brothers, I also loved this idea that Vedanta is all about Khandan Mandan.Proposition, objection and demolition. These are the three things you keep doing. It is only when maturity comes after continuing to study scriptures and company of the great monks, when one starts understanding what religion is. Religion is very subtle. Spirituality is much more subtle and subtler aspects of spirituality, are meant only for the chosen few. Not everybody can understand.

So, it is slightly difficult for people to appreciate Vedanta. I don't mean the popular Vedanta that you hear everywhere. I mean the true Vedanta, what we are going through right now, is quite subtle and as we proceed, you will see how subtle the arguments are. It is not the question of accepting or not accepting. The arguments are there. If your mind is subtle enough to catch them, you realise what is being said. That is it.

Vedanta is not about argumentation. Vedanta is not about offering very fine arguments by subtle minds. Vedanta is all about only one thing and that is freedom. Vedanta is about spirituality and that way every religion, anywhere in the world, even the religion of the aborigines, who worship stones, woods, even they are striving to outgrow their limitations. Religion is about freedom. When you take all the religions under one umbrella, it becomes Vedanta. Swamiji has very beautifully explained this and we have mentioned it earlier. Vedanta is about freedom. Now what is the biggest motive, what is the engine that pushes you forward in spiritual life. Have you ever wondered? What makes you go further and further in spiritual life? See when you go through different works on spirituality, even a simple book like Vedantasar, introduction to Vedanta or any of these Prakarana grantha like Vivek Churamani and others, they lay down conditions that if you want to study Vedanta you need to have all these. Similarly if you study Gita, it starts with the chapter “Grief and Sorrow of Arjuna”, that is Arjun Vishad Yoga. So, somewhere your world has to get demolished. Vedantasar, very beautifully says, you must feel as if your hair is on fire, that means you are running away from the world. When you come to the Upanishads,they have two aspects. One aspect is spiritual realisation and the second is the way they come to us - Theoretical learning. The Upanishads were taught to disciples, disciples who used to stay at the ashram of the teacher. They just used to memorise and only a few could reach the level of realisation.. Now there were also conditions for discipleship.

Here we are discussing spirituality. Core spirituality. What drives you forward. Anandam, Joy. Freedom is Joy. Those who have my book, Carving a Sky, would know. Joy lies in freedom. Freedom is about Joy. Freedom is space.Space is joy. Spirituality begins in joy, continues in joy, ends in joy. Just that the intensity of joy keeps on increasing. Spectrum of joy keeps on increasing. One of the fundamental things in Christianity is that one has to accept that he is born a sinner. Actually Christianity stands on forgiveness. You are a sinner and God will forgive you or Jesus will take the sin on himself etc. That means to be a good Christian you have to admit that you are a sinner. Similarly in some other religions first you have to have a slavish mentality. You are going to listen to your master.

But Vedanta is separate. Here I am discussing core spirituality. I will ask you one very simple question. Do you ever aspire to be spiritual? Do you ever feel like growing in spirituality? Do you ever feel like going nearer to God? If yes, the question might come to your mind, what is the way? The way is joy. When I joined the Ramakrishna Mission, I was very young, barely

twenty and I knew the monks and I knew the center, the first feeling that I had was of freedom, of joy. Nothing could drag me back. If you really want to grow in spirituality make sure to come out of long faces. Make sure to come out of any kind of fear. And make sure to maintain this sense of joy. This exactly is what is being discussed here. In the previous chapter this is what was discussed. Once you have Advaita as the driving force, we have the double engine in spirituality. The engine in the front is joy pulls you forward and the engine in the back is joy it will push you forward. And it takes us to joy. Nothing outside joy. If you are a true follower of Vedanta, if you truly want to be spiritual, you shall forget all other ideas, you have to be established in joy. And what can give you maximum joy? This is what Mandukya Upanishad says and Karika explains - Advaita. Advaita alone gives you joy ,the driving force.

In Suburban railways we have EMU trains where we have a set of motor coaches powering the train-set interspersed with passenger coaches. They help to give quick acceleration to the train. So they don't have a separate engine. Some coaches act as passenger carriers as well as engines too.They can pick up speed very quickly. Similarly if you want to speed up your spiritual life, stay happy, stay full of joy and aim to be in joy all the time. And ultimately reach that state of joy, that state of bliss from where there will never ever be any fall.

The idea is that as you grow into spirituality, as you grow more and more you find that intensity of your joy increases. So I don't trust any of these spiritual works where they are talking about asking for forgiveness, being a slave etc. I am the son of God, I am the child of God. Read the Bible, Jesus himself says, you have to be joyful. You are with the bridegroom. If you are with the bridegroom, why should you be in pain, why should you be lamenting? Anyway that is an entirely different issue, what we are discussing here is Advaita alone in Shiva. Shiva is Auspicious. Advaita alone is Mangala – Auspicious. Advaita alone gives you that double engine push and pull both.

In any system of thought, when the action and its result are one and the same, that particular thing is always better. Here you find that action is joy. To be full of joy, you are taking the Lord's name, you should be full of joy. And that joy should not ever go away and the goal is also joy. Kriya, action and result both should be joy. This is what our Mandulya Karika is explaining In verse no 33, in the previous chapter it was shown that, the diversity that we know, all the pain pleasure they come because of the diversity. Sloka said,

भावैरसद्भिरेवायमद्वयेन च कल्पितः - whatever we see in this world they are all imagined on the Atman, even the ultimate reality perceived differently is imagined on the Atman. These are unreal, yet imagined on the real. The joy, fearlessness, comes only when you are established in Advaita. So this idea was that the substratum is Atman and the manifestation is also Atman. The manifestation when you see differently for example, it was discussed how

some people take Prana, energy as the ultimate reality. This Atman is alone is the infinite ocean of Atman, which appears as waves somewhere and that wave is called Prana. But actually there is no absolute, there is no real existence of Prana. See, no one questions that Prana is not there. Advaita Vedanta, Mandukya Karika, very well accepts that prana is there. So we fully accept that Sri Rama is there, Sri Krishna is there. But we say that their existence is not real. Real means it has to continue in the past, in the present and in the future. When we say that Sri Ramakrishna was born in 1836 and passed away in 1886, he is Sri Ramakrishna the person. But that is Sri Ramakrishna the man. Before 1836 , he didn't exist, after 1886, he didn't exist. How can he be God? Can God be born? It is so naive to speak like that! How can God be born? He is infinite. Suddenly there is a manifestation of a particular wave. Advait alone exists. It is certainly a manifestation, that manifestation appears to us as real because we are in the realm of mind and till we have mind, we will accept that to be real. Nothing wrong with that. But with that will come fear. So for example, in certain dualistic religions, the moment you accept God, external to you or ruling over you, you may love him, you may hate him, but because there is duality the element of fear will always be there. You may love someone as intimately as intensely as you wish, but a time may come, a date may come, a moment may come, an occasion may come, when some kind of separateness will come. Some kind of difference will come, some kind of distance will come. A happy, loving couple can even go for divorce. Why? Because ultimately there cannot be any oneness between two individuals. Wherever you have two, there is fear. Wherever there are two, most importantly there will always be differences. You can go on talking about oneness, you can go on talking about love, a dualistic religion can go on talking that God loves you, a dualistic religion can go on talking about you loving God, but remember the element of fear will always be there. If there is an element of fear, can you ever imagine yourself to be fearless. And It can never be Shiva, the auspicious. One does not need to be a great scientist to understand this argument. From there we come to verse no 34, which is our subject today.

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नाऽऽतमभावेन नानेदं न स्वेनापि कथंचन ।

न पृथाङ्नापृथक्किंचित् इति तत्त्वविदो विदुः ॥ कारिका 34॥

This manifold does not exist as identical with Atman nor does it ever stand independent by itself. It is neither separate from Brahman nor is it non-separate. This is the statement of the wise

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We see the diversity. When I say I am different from this pen there is diversity. What is this diversity? You can go on talking about Advaita, you can use flowery words, you can use wonderful examples, you may quote the masters, however the problem of diversity remains and this diversity has to be explained. Karika beautifully says that the diversity in the

universe does not exist as an entity identical with Atman. It is not the same as Atman. Nor does it exist by itself. This Pen is not one with Atman, nor does it have a separate existence.This is a very crucial point. The existence of this pen is neither identical with Atman nor does it have a separate independent identity. Not a very difficult argument but a very interesting argument. And neither is it separate from Brahman nor is it non-separate. You cannot say it is separate from Brahman nor can you say it is non-separate.

When some of these ill-informed people from different religions, come and criticise Hindus for being idol worshippers, idolaters , *pouttalika*, they forget this point that when we worship an image, we do not see it as separate from God, nor do we see as non-separate. Now this pen can have two possibilities, one is Pen has this independent existence as compared to God. This is duality. Whatever duality you talk about, for example in Christianity, in Islam, in Vaishnavism in India, they talk about duality. What is duality? Duality says, God is true and this world is also true.

The other possibility is that the pen is separate from God. Advaita says it is not so.

Then is this pen Atman? Is this pen God? No, it is not. What is it? Nothing. It is just a play of name and form. It is just a manifestation. Now just remember that when we talk of an object, any object, even God, you objectify God. See when people of any religion talk, for example we talk of Sri Ramakrishna. When we talk of Sri Ramakrishna as God, unconsciously, without our meaning so, we objectify Sri Ramakrishna.Those who worship Jesus and other religions, they don't know that they have objectified your God. when people come to kill the Hindus, when they come to demolish Hindu temples, when they ridicule Hindu religion, they forget that they themselves have objectified their God. The moment you use a name for your God, you have objectified. But anyway, let’s not even go into that argument. The simple thing is till you are in the realm of mind, your God will always be objectified. Till you see this world as made up of objects, your God will always be an object. And this is a very serious problem. And let me tell you that, Vedanta literature is all about this. And yet there is just no way that you can get out of objectification of God. Because till your mind is there you will always see diversity. Till you are seeing diversity even God is just an object, just a larger object. God is the ruler of this objective world.

The King is non-separate from its subjects theoretically and that is why Kings are deposed. That is why you get a new King once the King is dead. Basically the King is not separate from the citizens. Just like that God is not different from the objects over which He rules. It is a very simple argument. Just that we don't want to understand, we don't want to take it. So, this Karika, this verse builds on the arguments that have been building from the beginning.

So this pen, does this pen have an existence? What does your mind say? Of course it is an object. But Advaita says it is not an object, because it does not have an independent existence. Well then, is this Atman? No it is not. So it is neither one with Atman, nor separate

from Atman. Then what is it? It has no existence. It is a play of mind. And till there is this play of mind, till you are seeing the diversity , you can never be at peace, you can never be in fearlessness, you can never have joy. The ultimate goal of life is to be happy, to be joyful and that can never come to you because you are seeing diversity. All the pain in life, all the suffering in life, all the fear in life, all failures in life, all tears in life come simply because you are seeing diversity. So, is Vedanta a mental thought? No it is not.

Shiva means all that is auspicious. That is the meaning of Shiva in the Upanishads. Shiva implies non-duality. Shiva implies oneness. Ashiva is when you see duality.

What exactly happens when you are lustful? What happens when you want to grab something? What happens when you are jealous towards somebody? What happens when you are violent towards somebody. What happens when you are afraid of someone? Your mind being very powerful, creates the dividing line. I and you and we become separate. Mind plays further tricks. And says take what is with that person, and if that person does not give, shoot him down. If that person is powerful, wait for the opportune moment. Can a person be ever at peace with such a mentality? No, one cannot be. So, do we develop this outlook? No.

Advaita is a reality. It is a reality that has been experienced by countless sages. Even when Jesus forgave people who crucified him, he was established in this Advaita. Because, unless one is established in Advaita one cannot really reach that level where you are ready to forgive your enemies.

Advaita is something that you realise in the depths of meditation. Number one, once you come back, you come back to the realm of mind and you see the diversity. But now the diversity that you see is different. We are discussing this.

So the first thing is, what we are discussing, is it an outlook or a reality? When motivational speakers say that you can do it etc., they are asking you to have a positive outlook. Is Advaita something like that? The pop Advaita that is now getting world wide appreciation, Advaita is not that. It is a reality. But of what use is that where there is no diversity? I still want to enjoy the world, I still want to express myself! Is there any way out? Yes there is. Sri Ramakrishna beautifully said, this is what we will discuss a bit. Those of you who are serious, please keep in mind that reality should be practiced in our real life too, even when we are not facing it. That is the ultimate reality, So you should be prepared for it. For example, death is the ultimate reality. You should be prepared for death all the time. That does not mean that you go and commit suicide. For example, we know there is death, we know there is disease, yet people go and do lots of things and somewhere in the back of mind they think that I will definitely live till tomorrow. At the same time they also know that they would not be able to live for a very very long time . No one says he will live for 200 years. These two streams of thoughts are working simultaneously in the mind, lots of things

that we do, we do keeping this idea very clear in our mind that we are not going to live for 200 years or say maybe 100 years. At the same time we have this faith, we have this conviction that we will live to see another day. Something similar happens with Advaita. Advaita being reality, Sri Ramakrishna very beautifully says that tie this knowledge of Advaita in the helm of your cloth (অদ্বতৈ জ্ঞান আঁচলে বঁধে যা ইচ্ছা কর।).

In ancient India ladies used to wear Saris and men used to wear Dhotis, and if they had to carry something important, they would tie it to the helm at the end of the piece of cloth - the sari or the dhoti.. So keep that Advaita knowledge constantly. When you tie something in the knot, in your dhoti or sari, it is a constant reminder.Just like that, keep Advaita tied in the piece of cloth that you are putting on all the time. Every behaviour of yours has to be dictated by philosophy, not that I am going to die maybe a hundred years old, but by the philosophy that we are all one. Today itself I was talking to one of my brother monks and we were having discussion on Advaita Vedanta, and I said that people keep on talking mostly on how Advaita talks about Maya and how Advaita talks about the unreality of the world. We forget that Advaita is also about oneness, nothing exists other than you. Don't be scared of anyone. Don't try to possess someone. You can love anyone you wish that does mean that you will like to possess it. There is a fundamental difference between loving someone or something and possessing it . For example, say when we go to the President's house in Delhi, we appreciate it, but that does not mean that I want to be the president. I can appreciate beauty, I can appreciate some paintings, but that does not mean I want to possess them. People who want to possess something, the moment they see it, are sick or may be childish. Children are like that. They see something, they want to have it. And mentally sick people, the dictators, if they set their eyes on something , they want to have it. But if you are spiritually mature, you keep the philosophy of the Advaita as the guiding motto you would never behave like that. What is that guiding motto? Whatever emotions, whatever acts must be regulated by Advaita. Sri Ramakrishna beautifully puts it and when Swamiji talks about all knowledge is within you, all power is within you, he is talking about Advaita. Actually it is a fact. You don't have to fear God, you don't have to love any God, love yourself that will do.

These are not outlooks, these aren't some philosophy of life, these are realities.

Now here I will just give you an example from Sri Ramakrishna’s life, because you see, it is difficult to understand Advaita, unless you have studied the biography of Sri Ramakrishna and studied the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna. I was very lucky that from my earliest days of monastic life Ramakrishna Mission has a wide range of books and although we read the Gospel and life of Sri Ramakrishna very thoroughly, I was especially lucky that I was drawn into it deeply. And I have read one or two pages daily throughout my life. So practically the

entire Gospel is in my head. So it was extremely easy for me to understand Vedanta. Vedanta is extremely subtle. Even the great Sadhu Babas who explain Vedanta really cannot do it properly, I am not belittling their efforts, I am just telling a fact.

Sri Ramkrishna, he was sitting in Dakshineswar, it was towards the end of his life and he describes everything as pure consciousness. That was not a new development. He was saying this from the time that he had his realisations. In the Dakshineswar Kali temple, being a shakti temple, goats were sacrificed. And Sri Ramakrishna says the sacrificial goat, which is about to die, is pure consciousness. The person who is about to sacrifice, is pure consciousness. The sword that will cut, is pure consciousness. And the pole where the sacrificial goat is to be tied, is also pure consciousness. See this very interesting thing. Sri Ramakrishna is seeing the pure consciousness that is Advaita and he is also seeing the diversity and that diversity doesn't have an exclusive existence. This is what Mandukya Karika is saying. Just remember this simple example.

Please forgive me if I have not been able to explain this properly. Actually, unless you have done some intense sadhana you cannot understand these things. This is not like making a child understand that two and two make four. Just to get the job of an ordinary Indian clerk, you need to be a graduate. To understand Advaita, which is the highest of knowledge dont expect that you will gain it just like that. You need to struggle. You need to work hard - memorise the whole of Gita, memorise Upanishads, whatever you study in scriptures, you need to memorise it. Because that idea has to keep on revolving in your head all day long. Only when you are living an idea, does the idea reveal itself truly. Because no one can make you grasp. I may sound slightly disheartening but this is a fact. Simplistic ideas of God, there is a God, up above the clouds, looking down at us. Taking care of us, any one can understand. Try applying reason, it will just crack. It will have a wide crack.

Advaita has never cracked. But it is difficult to grasp. If you study the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, if you study the life of Sri Ramakrishna, at least you will have some concrete examples before you. Advaita is not an outlook, Advaita is not a philosophy, Advaita is not a theory. Advaita is a reality. So, with this fundamental idea made clear, we continue.

नाऽऽतमभावेन नानेदं न स्वेनापि कथंचन - The diversity, the object, the world, which you see all the time,we get up in the morning,we look up at the world and we see the diversity. We go to sleep with the diversity taken inside. Even when we are slowly wading into the dream world and finally dragged into the sleep world, there is diversity. What does Mandukya Karika say? It is not just saying something out of blue. These arguments have been building up over the last 25 chapters, and we will continue to build. This diversity does not have any independent existence, Nor is it one with Atman. With this knowledge, when you start analysing, multiplicity vanishes for us daily.

I often get chocolates from the visitors, of various shapes, sizes and tastes. Some are white, some are dark, and some are milk chocolates. So many variations. But if we look at them just as chocolates, the differences are resolved. Ultimately they are all a mix of cocoa powder, sugar and some other elements. The same is true for various types of sandesh that we get in Bengal. With so many varieties, names and shapes, at the end of the day, all are a combination of milk and sugar. Immature people can fight over it. When one analyses it is only sugar and milk, or just sweetmeats.

When you go to that spiritual plain, you realise that there is no multiplicity, there is no diversity and the everyday example of Advaita says, when you imagine a snake on a rope that snake does not have an independent existence away from the rope, nor is it one with the rope. This is the example that makes it clear. Snake was never there, you just imagined. Now why did I imagine? Because you have been imagining from the time of creation. When was this creation? According to the scripture, It is timeless. It has been going on. In these matters we have to depend entirely on the masters.

When you analyse when you go deep, you realise that the diversity is not real. Not real as independent and not real as with Atman. This idea is repeated in every Vedanta literature. It is there in Upanishads, it is there in the Gita, it is there in Sri Ramakrishna, it is there in Swami Vivekananda, It is there in Ramana Maharshi. Any master of Advaita will tell you the same thing. Even Jesus tells in the Bible that I and my father in Heaven are one. Only problem is Christians say that it is case specific. It is only in the case of Jesus. It is like that. But here we say that it is true for all.

When we are talking about a philosophy, when we are talking about truth, the supreme reality, the stupid people will immediately say Oh! So you and your mother are one? Yes of course! We are one on the spiritual plane, not in this world. Because I belong to this world, that is the world of mind. You also belong to this world of mind.

So why discuss something which is not apparent? Well that is exactly what scriptures are for. Simply because I am not able to reach there, simply because you are not able to reach there, does that mean that you will dilute the ideal. No we will not. Simply because you have not seen an electron and you will not be seeing an electron, does that mean we shall not accept particle physics? The diversity that we encounter all day throughout our lives, they have no existence. Once you realise it, this is what the Karika says - **न पृथाङ्नापृथक्किंचित् इति तत्त्वविदो विदुः** - those who have realised the truth, - **तत्त्वविद** - those who have seen the truth, understands that there is no diversity.

Why do the Muslms believe in Prophet Muhammad? Why do they go by his words? Because they believe that Prophet Muhammad knew the truth. Why Christians believe in Jesus? Because they believe that Jesus knew the truth. And why are we going to believe

Mandukya Karika? Because we believe that sages have seen the truth. Simple thing! We go by traditions, we believe in some personality, we believe that this person had experienced the truth, this person knew the truth. Then we go by it. The only difference is that in other religions there was only one great person whom they worship, whom they follow, the Prophet. But we have hundreds and thousands of sages. In the Vedas itself you come across hundreds of sages. Sages who had their experience of reality and described that for us. They say that, when you see this diversity, they are not as different as say for example horse and the buffalo, two different animals. They don't have any existence. It is the mind that creates all those differences. Where did this mind come from? We have no answer to this. This we have discussed many times. So we are not going into it. So the people who have realised the truth, “Atmajna” , is the knower of Atman. We all have the potential to know the truth and get rid of diversity. We just discussed this theoretically.

27. The Way of the Blessed.

We have been discussing Mandukya Karika and we covered up to verse no 34 of Vaitathya Prakarna, the second chapter. So far we have been discussing what Brahman is and how Brahman alone is the truth. And everything else that we see, whatever we see, our body, mind, experience of the world, are mere appearances. It is not o

nly that Brahman is the truth and everything else is like a mirage, but Mandukya Karika is also saying that Brahman alone is appearing as all these.
Here there is a slight confusion because of Buddhists in Vedanta. So let us digress a bit and make the idea clear.
We are experiencing this world. Vedanta does not question that. But what Vedanta says is that the world that we are seeing is mithya as world, but as Brahman it is truth. Brahman alone is appearing as the world.
The problem with Buddhists, their Shunyavada, and many of their other schools is that they have brought this confusion about maya, where it means it doesn't exist. Actually, Vedanta very often uses the example of snake and rope, it also uses the example of mirage. So, we somehow tend to believe that this world does not exist. But that is shunyavada, that is Buddhist thought. Vedanta does not say that. Here is this pen, according to Buddhists, the ultimate reality is the pen does not exist. Shunya! But Vedanta says that the pen does not have ultimate existence, ultimate reality, which means that the pen is very much there, this world is very much there, you are there, I am there, but we do not have the ultimate reality

the way Brahman is real. When I was a young monk, I had great difficulty in understanding these things, because of the popularity of Shunyavada and because of the confusion created by lots of Vedantic monks, particularly of the Himalaya regions.

Vedanta does not say that this world does not exist. This world very much exists, everything exists. But their existence is not as real as Brahman. For example, when we look at two objects you go in the streets and say you watch a car going and you also see a bus going. You know that the car is different from the bus. As far as reality is concerned, the car is as real as the bus. Anyone who might have seen only a bus in his or her life, they wonder where this car has come from. Similarly a person who has seen only cars, will wonder where the bus has come from. However both the bus and car are real. But when we are discussing Advaita, it is not that Brahman is real and this world is also real. It is not that Brahman is also real and this pen is also real. Not so. For us the ordinary people this pen is real, and Brahman is also real. For those who have reached the state of meditation, state of non-duality, they know that Brahman alone exists. That namrup, the name and form (of the pen, of the world) that is false. Name and form that is false. It is just an appearance on the Brahman. It is like an Upadhi, a super-imposition.

When Vedanta says that the world is superimposed on Brahman the way a snake gets superimposed on rope, what it means to say is that the world is very much real but it is real as Brahman not as an independent entity. I am holding this pen in my hand. My hand is real and this pen is also real as far as this world is concerned. It is like a golden ornament where the ornament is mere appearance but actually it is gold. Or at least in that case, you might say that some technique etc, has been added. But as far as Brahman is concerned and this world is concerned, the world does not have an existence as far as real existence is concerned.

This is where people get confused. As name and form, as nam and rup, they very much exist. There is no question about that. People talk about Aham Brahmasmi and the world is a dream. World is not a dream, it is very much real. However it is not real as in the sense that Brahman is real, because Brahman alone is the absolute ultimate real. Everything that is there is mere name and form. What Vedanta says is that name and form are unreal. Remove name and form, and it will be the same Brahman. There is an actor. Remove his dress and make up that he has put on. You get the real person. Similarly as far as this world is concerned, my existence and your existence is concerned, they are very much true. But we are true or real from the aspect of Brahman. The same person changes from a kid to a young adult, then becomes an old person and finally dies. It is the same person continuously changing. The change is not real. We often say that change is the only reality in this world. But according to Shastras, it is the permanence which is real. The change is apparent. Just like that this world is apparent. It is not that this world is like a dream.

It is not that this world does not exist. The world very much exists. Nor is it that this world is real, nor is this world a dream. The world is real only as Brahman. As a name and form it is very much real. But as far as absolute reality is concerned, it is not. This pen is real as far as its name is concerned, its form is concerned and its utility is concerned. But it does not have an absolute reality. To explain further, I again take my favourite example of my pen.

Here is my pen and for me, this pen is very much real. Because I use this pen to write. Now how real is this pen? According to Shunyavada, this pen does not have ultimate reality. This makes us think that this is like a dream that vanishes. This makes us think that the pen does not exist in reality. But Vedanta does not say that. Vedanta will say that it is just a manifestation of Brahman. Manifestation is the keyword. So, what is real in this? It is name and form. But name and form by themselves are false. Brahman alone is the truth. So is this pen real or false? The pen is real as Brahman but as the pen, it does not have an absolute reality and so is false. So it is false and it is also true. That is why it is known as Maya. Maya means that. Maya means it is real and at the same time it is unreal. Brahman is something which is always real. Unlike the absolute non-existence like the son of a barren woman, which never exists, this pen exists and at the same time it does not exist. That is why it is Maya. It is not easy to understand Maya. See, in Vedanta if you understand Maya you have understood Vedanta. Because maya is the weak link in Vedanta. And that is why Dvaitins and Vishista Advaitins and others attack maya. Because maya is something that cannot be explained.

We are talking about reality. Reality means that which is in the past, in the present and will continue to be in the future. This is the only definition of reality. This pen was not in the past, this pen will not be in the future, but it is there in the present. Do you say this is not present? It is very much present. So it is real. Will it continue to be in the future? No. Was it there in the past? No it was not. So that raises the question. There is something fishy about this existence. What is that fishy thing? This is where Vedanta says as Brahman it is real, as pen it has no reality because reality means that which will continue to exist in the entire time frame and beyond time.

Two things I wanted to say are that because of Buddhists and because of some wrong teaching by some Vedantic teachers we think that this world is a dream. This world is not a dream. This world is dreamlike, that means it comes and it goes. That it comes and it goes shows that there is some kind of reality. That some kind of reality is Brahman. And that it goes away shows that it is actually name and form. Name and form by themselves are not real. So this world exists as far as my objective reality is concerned, this world exists as far as its transitoriness is concerned, its name and form is concerned. But it does not have absolute reality.

In Samkhya philosophy, Purusha is real, that means consciousness is real. Prakriti is also real. Purush and Prakriti, consciousness and matter, both will continue to be real forever. In Christianity God is real and the soul is real. The existence of soul is independent of God. and both are real.

But in Vedanta, world and Atman, world and Brahman, both of them are not real separately. Only Brahman is real. And yet the world appears. That is the beauty. That is Maya. So don't think that it doesn't exist. This is like the son of a barren woman because the moment you say barren it cannot have a child, and if you say son she cannot be barren. This is like a cold fire, which you cannot have. It is either a fire or it is cold. Oxymoron. At the same time it is not real that way , Purusha and Prakriti are real. It is in between.

Just know that Brahman alone exists. There is no second reality. World also does not have any reality. I see the world. Why? Because Brahman itself is appearing. So is there a real transformation? No it is not. This transformation is appearance.

When Swamiji was talking at the thousand island park, which is known as the inspired talks, there was one elderly gentleman, who used to listen to Swamiji devotedly and after every talk he would come and say Swamiji, actually you mean to say that we are Brahman? Suppose you know that you are Brahman, how does it matter to you?

For example, those who have been to the Himalayas, you have seen the Himalayas, you appreciate it. But how is it relevant to you? We shall now go into this.

When you visit a nice place you feel good. You see a piece of art and you feel good. It ends. But how does it help you? There is a God sitting up in heaven. How does it help you? Now dualistic religions will say, pray to that God, please Him and He will bestow you with such and such benefits.

But in Advaita Vedanta we don't have any such God. It is Brahman. Suppose you know that Brahman alone is true, consciousness alone is truth, how does it help you? How does it matter to you? Well, Advaita, and for that matter every religion, every religion, mind it, is not only a matter of belief only. Some religions are a matter of belief indeed, but they are not about feeling good. They affect your very way of life. These dictate the philosophy of life. These mould your life. If you are a good Christian, might have heard, those of you might have interacted with Christians, they will say that, if you are a good Christian, then you don't lie, you don't do this, don't do that, but what about if you are a good Muslim? There also they will say the same thing. They are somehow confused between values and being religious. Religion is something entirely different, Values, the same kind of values are taught in every religion. So when you say being a good Christian, it means nothing. Maybe you might say that by being a good Christian you believe in Lord Jesus etc. Those who are true followers of religion, they will say that their inner life gets enriched. What is that inner life? How you look

at the world and how you look at yourself. It is not only about the values, it is not only about speaking the truth etc. Advaita offers you life philosophy as every other religion offers. There are two types of religious people. One is those who have realised Atman, for example Sri Ramkrishna, realised Atman. So, he has a way of life. And the other are those who aspire to be Jnani, those who aspire, they will imitate their ways of the jani.

The next verse elaborates what is the way of a jnani, whether you have realised Atman or you have taken the highway, you are on the way to realise Atman. It is all the same. So on to Karika 35.

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वीतरागभयक्रोधैरमुनिभिर्वेदपरागैः।

निर्विकल्पो ह्यं दृष्टः प्रापञ्चोपशमोऽद्वयः ॥ Karika 35॥

By the wise, who are free from attachment, fear and anger and who are well versed in the meaning of the Vedas, this (Atman) has been verily realised as totally devoid of all imaginations (such as those of Prana etc) free from illusion of the manifold , and non-dual

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So the wise, the jnani who are free from attachment, fear and anger and are well versed in the Vedas, have realised Atman as devoid of all fantasm and free from the illusions of the manifold and non-dual. That means there are certain conditions, without which you cannot be a brahma jnani. To be a jnani, you need to have certain qualifications. First you must know Vedas. You must have gone beyond the dualities of fear, anger, lust etc. and go beyond all prapancha, illusions. Now prapancha is a beautiful word in Vedanta. Prapanch means that which is tempting. Or that which is a disturbance. Brahman alone is the truth. Brahman cannot be a disturbance. The world of duality is a prapancha - nuisance, disturbance. So, nuisance which has no right to exist, that is prapancha and because of this, prapancha has become such a popular term with the Vedantic monks. They use the term often. “Sansar prapancha hai” - world is disturbance is a favourite saying of the Vedantins. This Karika says that a Muni, those who are constantly in a contemplative mood, those who know the essence of the Vedas, are those who understand Vedanta, and those who have gone beyond the illusion of duality. It is not only the duality of fear and fearlessness, it is not only the duality of overcoming lust and lustfulness, but it is every kind of duality like existence and nonexistence, subject and object. All this is known as prapancha. Dvaita prapancha. Delusion. And that becomes a nuisance. it can be seen only in the greatest of monks. Because they are not tied on to anything. That is why Vedanta is difficult to practise. Those who are still aspiring after name and fame, wealth etc. it is difficult.

However as we shall see, this can be applied in practical life also. And that is what Swami Vivekananda did. He tried to teach that the Vedanta which is meant only for the greatest of monks can be practiced even by common man. As we proceed we shall see. Those who are argumentative people, those who are into intellectual gymnastics, those who are trying to

grasp things intellectually they can never understand Brahman. Acharya Shankar makes it absolutely clear. If you really want to understand what Brahman is, if you really want to understand what Maya is, if you really want to get it in your life, you need to have certain qualities. First, to know the Vedas, the essence of the Vedas, Vedanta. Actually Vedanta is the essence of the Vedas. And you must be contemplative and you must have gone beyond duality, gone beyond lustfulness. By lust we mean the desire to acquire any thing that you wish to acquire. Something to keep for yourself, be that name and fame, be that wealth, be that wife, be that children. Now this is not possible in the world. That is why it is slightly difficult. So those who are just into argumentation, those who are trying to push forward their philosophy of life, they really cannot understand Vedanta. This is what this verse says. Every kind of nuisance, every kind of disturbance, gets destroyed by Advaita as it is all Shivam.
Now to verse 36

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तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं अद्वैते योजयेत्स्मृतिम्।
अद्वैतं समनुप्राप्य जडवल्लोकमाचरेत्॥ Karika 36॥

Therefore knowing the Atman to be such, fix your attention on non-duality. Having realised non-duality behave in the world like on insensible object.

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Once you understand Atman, and have your attention fixed on non-duality, behave in the world like an inert person. I just mentioned that there are two kinds of Jnani. One who has realised the truth, one who has truly seen Brahman, for him, through contemplation subject object duality vanishes. Then he does not see Brahman as object, he does not see Brahman as the subject, Because there are no two. Then naturally his behaviour will change. Once you know the reality of someone, your behaviour towards that person, that object changes. Similarly once you have known the ultimate truth about this world, your behaviour will change and what that change will be is **तस्मादेवं विदित्वैनं अद्वैते योजयेत्स्मृतिम्** - apply your mind to that. These greats behave like that.
And the other kind of Jani, the aspirants, the ordinary mortals have to practice them.
Now we cannot become Jada (inert) in a day. Jada means inert. Completely beyond praise, and as well as infamy. Somebody abuses you, somebody praises you, you go beyond that. You get happiness, you get misery, you go beyond that. Now can we go? We cannot . But if we keep the ideal alive, if you keep the idea aflame, you will see that you will now be tied as if to a spring that pulls you back to stability. This is the beauty of those who believe in God, this is the beauty of those who believe in Advaita. You know that everything that comes your way, is unreal. But because your mind has not yet reached the highest state, you are getting swayed by it. And you remind yourself that I suffer as I have not yet reached that state. Once you actually see it, you will go beyond it forever. In your interaction with the world there has

to be a complete restraint. Just that when you are a practitioner, when you are practicing the path of becoming a Jnani, you will have to apply this restraint. When you are Jnani, this restraint will automatically be there. If you practice Advaita and continuously try to remember that all others are Brahman, the same Brahman like you, yourself, how can there be hate and anger? Keeping in mind this reality continuously is very difficult but not impossible. Once you know what is real, your behaviour changes. Once you know pleasure is followed by pain, once you know Brahman alone is the truth everything else changes. So how do you then behave with the world?

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निस्तुतिर्निर्नमस्कारो निष्स्वधाकार एव च।
चलचलनिकेतश्च यतिर्यादृच्छिको भवेत् ॥ Karika 37॥

The man of self-restraint should be above all praise, salutation and all rites prescribed by the Smriti in connection with the departed ancestors. He should have this body and the Atman as his support and depend upon chances , i.e., he should be satisfied with those things for his physical wants, that chance brings to him.

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The illumined persons do not make pranam to any deity, they do not go by any rituals, and they do not have to offer pranam to anyone. That means they do not have to please others. They go beyond all rights and all rituals. This is natural, because they know that there is the same Brahman everywhere. For example Sri Ramakrishna when he completed his sadhana once he wanted to offer water as tarpan, the ritual for the Hindus to his ancestors. But he found that his fingers remained open and could not close them to retain the water for tarpan. There is a description that once you reach that state you cannot perform these rituals. It actually happens. But it is only for one who has reached the stage of realisation. till then one should not do it.

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तत्त्वमाध्यात्मिकं दृष्ट्वा तत्त्वं दृष्ट्वा तु बाह्यतः।
तत्त्वीभूतस्तदारामः तत्त्वादप्रच्युतो भवेत् ॥ Karika 38॥

Having known the truth regarding what exists internally (i.e.within the body) as well as the truth regarding what exists externally (i.e the earth etc) he becomes one with Reality , derives his pleasure from It and never deviates from the real.

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Once you have known the truth, once you have known the reality, existing internally as well as externally, that Brahman is outside and Brahman is inside, that Brahman is not like God sitting up there, that Brahman is pure consciousness that is inside and that is outside, you become one with the reality. You become one with the reality and exist in reality and never deviate from reality. Once you know what is reality, once you know that Atman alone is the reality, Brahman alone is the reality, and that you are one with it, you know that Brahman is outside and you know Brahman in inside , Brahman alone exists then you don't fall prey to any illusion ever again. There are people who consider the mind to be the Atman. Well

people who think that mind is the ultimate reality and so when the mind is disturbed, they say I am disturbed. When the mind does not get its expectations, does not get the expected results, it becomes upset. We all become. Why? Because for us, the mind is the ultimate reality. So, those who have realised Atman, they know that the mind has no role to play. Because the mind has no role to play, that is why there is no subject and no object. And because of this, he never identifies with the mind. So his mind never comes below a particular level. What is that level? Atman.

Once I witnessed a very interesting conversation. One person was saying he is sad, he is this, he is that etc. There was a monk, he told that brother why do you see yourself as a person? Why don't you see yourself as Atman? Think of yourself as Atman and these things will not touch you. I was moved by that statement that you have to remind yourself all the time that you are Atman. Your outside is Atman, your inside is Atman,. So don't you ever identify with mind and with the working of the mind. This is basically how a Brahmajnani behaves, how a jnani behaves.

Vaitathya Prakarana ends here. We shall now start with the third chapter, Advaita Prakarana, where there will be discussion on different philosophies and how Advaita enters there and shows that Advaita is different from other philosophies.

Chapter 3

Mandukya Karika - Advaita Prakarana

28. Reality in Advaita

We had gone through the last few verses of the second chapter of Mandukya Karika, where it was shown how even people who have not realised, can control their behaviour and try practicing Advaita in their daily life.

Now we are going to start the third chapter of Mandukya Karika, which is called Advaita Prakarana. Before we start it is important to take note of a few points.

Unlike the other religious practices, which may be any religion, say Islam or Christianity or even Hinduism, Advaita is difficult. It requires an extremely sharp mind. The path of Advaita, that is Advaita Sadhana, comes in three stages.

One is that to understand Advaita one has to be contemplative. Without this it is impossible to have a grasp on Advaita. We have grown up knowing the fundamental reality of this world

that I exist and you exist. Now that you exist, one just has to remove this you and bring in God. I am there and God is there. It is so easy to understand. One of our Swamijis, Swami Swananandaji Maharaj, who was in America for a very long time, was the head of Berkeley center, came back to India and headed the Advaita Ashram. It was a matter of great luck that I could discuss Advaita with him. He said, it is extremely difficult for the Ramakrishna Mission to be popular in America,and for that matter in any country. The argument was so simple! He said, if you go and tell people that Sri Ramakrishna is superior to Jesus, or any other God that they worship, it is very easy for them just to remove Jesus from their mind and bring in Sri Ramakrishna as some sects in India are doing it projecting Sri Krishna. It becomes very simple. You have Jesus or you have some other God, say there is Shiva, You just remove Shiva and place Sri Ramakrishna. It is so easy. But the moment you say that they are all true, it becomes extremely complicated for them. When you go for Advaita, something that we are discussing, they just cannot grasp. He said that in case you find new members joining the Ramakrishna Mission, people who are devoted in their family traditions or committed to their family traditions, and they come and become devotees of the Ramakrishna mission, know that that person has some worth. Because Advaita is so difficult to comprehend.

Now whatever path you take, whatever religion you follow, the fundamentals remain the same. I am there, this world is here. I am here, this pen is here. Everyone is conscious of this. The idea that I exist and the idea that you exist is there with us all. The I-consciousness and you-consciousness is present in everyone. Shankaracharya begins his Brahmasutra, his famous commentary, with this "yuṣmadasmat -pratyayagocarayoḥ- viṣayaviṣayiṇoḥ - tamaḥprakāśavad- viruddhasvabhāvayoḥ"-- That the sense-object (Vishaya) and the subject of sense-objects (Vishayin) which are within the range of the denotative power of the words 'Yushmat' and 'Asmat' respectively, and have natures as opposed to each other as darkness and light, cannot transform themselves into each other. yuṣmadasmat -pratyayagocarayoḥ - the idea that I exist and the idea that you exist. Why do you need philosophy for this? You might have heard statements like don't love anything in this world. Love God. Basically what they are trying to say is that there is love inside you. Instead of placing it on object A, put it on object B. It is so simple. Advaita is not like that. Advaita is a sea change, a complete paradigm shift. There are a lot of terms in modern day physics to express these things. So first, you have to understand what Advaita is. One has to listen and study and think very intensely.

Once you can understand what Advaita is, then the next step comes. Start practicing it in your daily life. This means first, do not pay much attention to the affairs of the world, and second, treat everyone as your own. The problem is that when we have to get what we want, we treat the world as our own. But when the other one needs me, then we just try to take our

shoulders away. This is the problem. This is not how Advaita works. Advaita is about self effacement. We do the other way round," You" effacement. That is not how it works. As you become more contemplative, more thoughtful, slowly the understanding becomes clear. As your understanding becomes clear, you start practicing it as much as you can. And if you can truly establish yourself in the practice of Advaita, you are great. After that comes realisation where you actually see it. Now that does not depend on your efforts. Your effort can take you up to two steps. First knowing and understanding and second practicing. The last step, realising is beyond you. And this is the first part.

The second part is extremely subtle and difficult to comprehend. It may require listening and reading multiple times. We are now entering into the philosophy of Advaita. It is highly technical and it can be disturbing at times. In the previous chapter, we were discussing what Advaita is. I am just putting the entire thing in a few sentences. Advaita has a lot of technical terms. One of the very important technical terms is Real, the opposite of real is Unreal. Advaita is about Real and Reality. And Advaita says discard Unreality. Now Unreality comes in two different forms. One is Non-existence which in Indian language is Aleek. That which does not exist. Second is temporary or transitory. That which is there, but which was not there yesterday and will not be there tomorrow. I mean it was not there in the past. It had a beginning sometime in the past and we know intuitively that it will end sometime in the future. So there are two kinds of Unreal. One is that which does not exist, like the son of a barren woman. And secondly, which is transitory. Advaita preaches that everything that surrounds us , including our own identity, your own identity, me Samarpananda, certain things are non-existent. Illusory. And sometimes they are just a passing phase.

Remember these two expressions - One, anything that is an illusion, non-existent, is not Advaita. Anything which is temporary, (temporary means that something that was born yesterday, will not be there tomorrow) is not Advaita. Advaita says focus on the real. Real is that is throughout uniform in time -past present and future. Just remember one simple definition - that which stays constant in past present and future, is real.

What our Mandukya Karika has been doing is, it is making every effort to make us understand that Atman alone is real, everything else is unreal. We also mentioned in the previous class that analogies are used to make an idea clear. When the idea itself is not clear then analogies do not work. I have seen with my brother monks sometimes when we discuss we offer some ideas, and we give examples immediately they pounce upon the examples. For example, the state of Atman is often compared to the infinite ocean. Now some gentleman from some other religion, said see your Atman is like the ocean and the ocean is full of sharks and whales. This is what Atman is. I was very young in those days. I did not understand the nitty gritty of philosophy. Even at times, I was shocked by the kind of argument. It is a comparison with the ocean that is why Lord Vishnu is often portrayed as

sleeping on Ksheersagar, ocean of milk, so that the problem of sharks and whales are done away with. Every analogy that we use we are using assuming that you understand a bit of Advaita. Otherwise these analogies do not work. If you become a bit contemplative, if you start thinking you will understand.

Imagine a huge ice castle, on a huge sea, maybe in the polar regions.,in which there is an ice museum having a huge number of artefacts large and small, and all made of ice. It is all ice inside and outside. Now imagine a small water droplet inside that museum, moving through the galleries and wondering that there is nothing other than ice. It is all ice, the huge museum building, the huge number and sizes of the artefacts all are ice. The droplet is amazed and feels lost. Then comes another water droplet and tells him that whatever is here, are all you only. For the first droplet it will be amazing and shocking to know that everything there is one and the same. Actually the entire thing is the same - water i,e H_2O. As H_2O they are all the same. But as the huge ocean and the drop they are different.

But actually they are coexisting and all the same H_2O. It is as if in the state of triple point. Triple point is the state, when at a particular temperature and pressure solid, liquid and vapour can coexist. Here we have water , ice and maybe some vapor. Normally we see ice and water or water and steam. But at the triple point all the three are there. You can see such experiments on Youtube showing all the three states together.

This universe is something like at the triple point where consciousness appears as mind, matter and also as consciousness. Which one is correct?

During summer when you take some cold water you ask for ice cubes, ice cubes are extremely important because you want it to cool your drink. Hot water, cold water and ice , they are all different for you. But for a scientist, who is working with water, who needs water, basically he needs H_2O . For him it makes no difference. Whether it is steam or water or ice. The three states that we are discussing for water are physical changes.These change of state from ice to water to steam are physical changes in Chemistry. There is no chemical change involved in such a change of state.

Now this physical change is known as unreal in Advaita. Physical change is unreal. Atman will never have a chemical change. Water can undergo a chemical change, but consciousness will never change. That is what Advaita continuously says that there can never be any actual transformation in consciousness. The problem is that we think that there is an actual transformation. Think of water H_2O , it can undergo chemical transformation and become something else, say Sodium Hydroxide NaOH. Or Sulphuric Acid (H_2SO_4).

Can there be any such change with consciousness? No. Now what Advaita Vedanta says is that everything that you see is essentially a physical change and these physical changes have no value whatsoever for an Advaitin. And when you actually realise Atman, you

actually see these things, you see that triple point where there is consciousness, there is mind and there is body there is matter.

We elaborated in the previous chapter how Sri Rammakrishna was seeing all the three at the same time. He said that there was Latu. later Swami Adbhutananda, sitting on the steps of the Kali temple with his face on his hand and Sri Ramakrishna said that I saw the same satchidananda. People appeared to him like pillows. Everybody is a pillow case within only cotton.

So if you can remember these things, physical change, chemical change and chemical reality. Chemical reality is H_2O. If there is a chemical change it becomes something entirely different. Will not be H_2O anymore. Now whatever form or shape it might take, if it is a physical change it will be only H_2O.

Something similar happens in case of consciousness. Once again analogies do not point at the reality. It is to understand reality we use analogy. What Advaita Vedanta is telling us is that focus on this spiritual reality the way a scientist will focus on the chemical reality. A scientist working in a chemical lab does not go by physical reality. He goes by the chemical reality. Similarly a spiritual person goes by spiritual reality.

Whenever you study a book on Advaita Vedanta, they try to negate everything physical about it. Just remember one very important thing that one becomes many, are of different kinds in this world. For example when you think of a tree, here in India you may imagine a mango tree.Those from America, think of an apple or an orange tree. You find that the same tree produces different fruits. Now those different fruits may or may not be the same. May or may not be.

The world coming out of Brahman is not like that. Now think of human beings. There is a lady.. She has three or four kids. All the four are coming from the same source. Each one of them has a completely individual personality. We wrongly think that me and this world are like this. Mother and four kids.

It is not like that. Now that world that appears before us is more like water becoming ice or water becoming steam. There is a change but there is no chemical change as such. So reality is not changing. This is the best example I can think of to make the idea clear here. From day one we have been discussing Advaita, Advaita only. So I hope that some idea of Advaita is clear to you. Just remember that anything within the realm of mind, anything that can be grasped by the mind is unreal. It does not matter whether it is an illusion or simply verbal reality or it is some kind of reality that is grasped by the senses. Ultimately they all belong to the mind. Anything belonging to the mind is unreal.

You may say, what about Advait? Advaita does not belong to the mind. It is beyond mind. Mind is like a wave on consciousness. Mind is like wave on Brahman. You can remember

this much , mind and consciousness are two different things. Mind is like wave on consciousness and, and matter is like a wave in the ocean of the mind.

Basically you have three. You have consciousness, you have mind and you have matter. The difference lies in grossness. Steam and water, ice, essentially they are one and the same. However in the case of Advaita, it is not about saying, either you say that they are pure consciousness or you say they do not exist. When you say they do not exist, you mean to say that as name and form they do not exist. In reality it has to have an existence. Atman alone has become all this. Ice Cubes do not have any separate existence, they are just name and form. It is all H_2O. Any scientist who needs water will be as comfortable with ice cubes as with a beaker of water.

In Chapter 1 that we discussed,Mandukya Karika took help from the Mandukya Upanishads, Nobody can question the Upanishads. Anyone who is following Hindu tradition cannot question the Upanishads. So you can see that that was the premise, it set the ball rolling and from there came the second chapter that we had been discussing till now, known as Vaitathya - illusion. What Karika did with that chapter was that it used different kinds of analogies, different kinds of arguments, arguments which were not really of very high quality, because it was about illusion. And you cannot prove illusion through arguments. The maximum you can do is to use analogies, that is what Mandukya did.

So now to prove Advaita first you say that our scripture says that. Like many other religions who say, my religion is true as our holy book says so and our holy book came from God. My God is true because my holy book says so. The Holy book is true because God says so. Not really a great logic. It is circular logic. If you apply your mind, you can only laugh.

I am just slightly deviating from the main topic. I was very much interested in the Ram Janmabhoomi case, not because of the sentiments but because of how the arguments were unfolding in the High Court. When the case was in the High Court, finally when the judge was delivering the judgement, they pointed to a very interesting fact. The logic against the existence of the Ram Janmabhoomi temple came from three eminent historians. How did they prove that they were eminent? The first said the second one is an eminent historian, the second one said the third one is an eminent historian and the third one said that the first one is an eminent historian. What an argument! I just laughed and laughed at the logic.

This is what happens in case of religion. My God is the greatest. Because my scriptures say that. Why scripture is correct because God has said so. What kind of argument! You are in such a wonderful circle.

Are you doing something like that here in Mandukya? No. To counter that, begins the third section, known as Advaita Prakaran. In this section, Advaita will be established purely philosophically, not logically, but philosophically. So what it will do is that it will go on taking up philosophy after philosophy and will keep on showing their fallacies. Just to caution you,

this is a highly technical section. And some of you may find it a bit boring. Do not get disheartened. Because you will come to know practically every system of Indian philosophy. At that time they did not know about other systems of thought.

When a philosophy runs on belief how can you even discuss them? So, just remember that the first chapter was based on scripture. As every religion says that my religion is correct. Why? Scripture says so . Why is your scripture correct? Because God says so. Why is God correct? Because my scripture says so. Mandukya Karika cracks that cycle here. It comes to philosophy. As we proceed, different philosophies will be coming. I will just tell you in brief what are the salient points of that philosophy and then how Karika counters that. So with that we begin Advaita Prakarana.

Acharya Shankar begins with his very short introduction saying that as a premise, Upanishads were taken, Atman alone exists and then through analogies and examples it was shown how everything is illusion. Then comes the problem of identity. The problem of identity takes you up to the level of unity, multiplicity and oneness. It extends up to worshipper and the worshipped. Well that is how the second chapter had ended.

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उपासनाश्रितो धर्मो जाते ब्रह्मणि वतंते।

प्रागुत्पत्तेरजं सर्वं तेनसौ कृपाणः स्मृतः ॥ Karika 1॥

The Jiva betaking itself to devotion (upasana) thinks itself to be related to the Brahman that is supposed to have manifested Himself. He is said to be of narrow intellect because he thinks that before creation all was the nature of the unborn (Reality)

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For those who have tendencies of a devotee, may find this verse extremely disturbing. It says a person that is a Jiva, takes to devotional worship. You worship Jesus, I worship Vishnu, I worship Shiva, I worship Sri Ramakrishna, why? Because my mind is totally fixed firmly in the manifested Brahman. The term is KaryaBrahma. There is Karan and Kariya - the cause and effect. This world is the manifest Brahman. So he thinks that before creation, it was of the same nature as the birthless, अज- aja. Therefore he is said to possess an inferior intellect. Verse no 1 says that when you worship God, with the idea that I am worshipping God, I will please him, I will make him happy. Then I will become one with Atman.

Before this creation I was pure consciousness, during creation, somehow I got this body mind complex. So there is a third entity. Consciousness is there, I am there, God is there. Let me worship Him and by His grace I will once again become that same Atman. But this is low intellect. This is extremely disturbing and dear listeners this has created a lot of confusion among the followers of Advaita. Rarely do you come across someone who thinks he knows Advaita and understands this idea correctly. Acharya Shankar deplores this idea of worship and the worshipped. Yet if you read Gita, 12th chapter, commentary by Acharya

Shankar, he is talking only of devotion. So where lies the fallacy in understanding? I am making clear what this verse no 1 says, anyone who worships God with the idea that God will grant me Mukti, God will grant me liberation, devotion will lead me to liberation because before this world was created I was one with Brahman. During creation somehow I became identified with this world and if I pray I will become one with that. This verse says this is a lower kind of understanding.

Now to understand what we have been discussing, there are certain points that are involved. Let us take the famous example of Adam's fall from Christianity. Those of you who have listened to our talks, particularly inspired talks where we have mentioned many times. Adam and Eve ate an apple and they had a fall from Eden. Those of you who have read my book, The world of religions, will see that there we have described in detail how fall from Eden, fall from grace is the worst sin. And the only goal in life is to go back to that state of purity. According to Advaita, rather let us say when I am explaining, the simple question is whether the fall of Adam and Eve is real or unreal. According to Jewish tradition and consequently with Christian tradition, Islamic tradition, it is real. Very much real. Fall was real, so rise has to be real. According to Advaita Vedanta this fall is transitory, It belongs to maya. This is not real, because if it is real, the bondage will become real, and Atman cannot have any bondage. That Adam ate an apple, has to be a real event, an actual event because of which he fell from Heaven. And then he does something good and goes back to Heaven. So the problem of eating the apple a second time will very much remain. So what will happen, like a pendulum of a clock he will keep on falling from Heaven and Going back to Heaven. Can it be liberation? Can it be mukti?

Think of any other religion. Let us not take their name. Let us not create problems. You worship your Ishta, whoever that is, it can be Krishna, it can be Vishnu, it can be Shiva, whatever from other religions, you worship your God and go to Heaven. Why did you fall down, because according to the middle east religions, you fell down because you committed a sin, you disobeyed God. Because you disobeyed God, your fall is real. Because your fall is real, your bondage is real. Because your bondage is real,your liberation is real and because your liberation is real, the fall was real, the possibility of your fall a second time is very much there. So, like this motion, going forward and coming backward will continue. And this kind of mukti and this kind of bondage will be akin to getting bound in time. It is a very simple logic, It is not rocket science.

Advaita sets its foot down and says no, this is unreal, the fall is unreal. Why unreal? This is because one who is with God can never fall down. And the fall is transitory in nature. This is what is being said in the first verse. So what about worshipping? Let us forget the story of the apple. Let us go back to worship. How do you place it? So, if you believe in KariyaBrahma, which is manifest Brahman. Remember one thing: whatever you worship,

you become one with that. It was shown earlier - **यं भावं दर्शनयेद्यस्य तं भावं स तु पश्यति** - The Guru shows you something and you become one with it. God is not the great gate keeper, to whom you pray, whom you show your ticket. Here is the ticket, Ok enter the cinema hall. This is juvenile! The very idea that somebody will be interceding on your behalf standing there, ok he has taken my name and now you allow him in heaven. We have Eden Garden here in Kolkata. The Eden garden of the heaven some VIPs standing on the gate and says he is known to me, allow him in. It is something like that. It is ridiculous. Does not stand to reason. Because if you enter there you will fall again. For the same reason that you fell the last time. More importantly you become what you worship. You become one with your ideal. If you worship something which belongs to KariyaBrahma, which belongs to this manifest universe , you become one with it. You cannot go beyond it. So if you are worshipping Krishna, who is God of the manifest universe, you will have to remain stuck in the manifest universe.

Now Sri Ramakrishna said a very simple way out. And that was, he had a vision at Kashi, that anyone who dies at Kashi Lord Shiva appeared before him and Mother Parvati removed her knots, the knots of the person who had died, and then Lord Shiva would say that look here is my Advaita rup which means that you have to see the form of Advaita. If you are a worshipper of Shiva, the Lord of the universe, you will stay stuck in the universe. You have to stay stuck in the universe. What happens when the universe dissolves during ultimate dissolution? No question comes, how can we say? Because the mind will not be there and so you don't know. You might come again. Whatever it may be, it cannot be liberation. To be liberated, you have to know even while living because in life only your mind is active, the mind as we understand. You have to know that non-duality is the reality. If God whom you worship, shows that reality, well and good. Well in that case your God is of a different kind. So here this idea that if you believe the personal God to be the real, to be as real then you cannot have any liberation. This is what Mandukya Karika says. But from the standpoint of Advaita, this personal God is also unreal. Either unreal or it is one with Brahman. But in his Gita Bhashya (do listen to our Gita talks) where Acharya Shanar repeatedly keeps telling that I am one with Brahman and Krishna who is teaching is also one with the Brahman, I am one with Vasudeva, Krishna, who is one with Brahman, This reality has to set in. You know that Krishna is God, nothing wrong with it because when you are in this relative world you will always be inferior to God. But in essence, coming back to H_2O, the ice, H_2O the steam, H_2O the water, in essence you are one with Vasudeva Krishna and in essence is Vasudeva Krishna is the same as Brahman, without that there cannot be Mukti. This is what this verse wants to say.

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Certain questions were raised during the talk. They are summarised below

Question was: Are mind and matter different or the same?
Kindly listen to our Raja Yoga talks where we have discussed this in detail.
In short, mind is matter. Because the mind itself is matter. This world belongs to Prakriti or Shakti. Prakriti itself is composed of three qualities: satva, rajas and tamas. These qualities are matter. So everything that is within it is matter.
In Christian world, the science based on Christian world, entire western science is based in Christian world, when they are talking about mind and matter, actually they don't know what they are talking about. They confuse between mind, and spirit and consciousness. Well they did not have thinkers as India had. In India they made ideas absolutely clear. So there is nothing called Advaita perspective, it is a common understanding. Advaita does not see things differently in any way compared to say Dvaita or any other system of philosophy.
But Western philosophy is completely confused between Mind, matter and consciousness. These things cannot be understood only by mind. To understand something you need to go higher. For example, when you were in class four, it was difficult for you to solve many questions in mathematics. When you came to class ten, you automatically understood the problem of class four. Because your mind evolved. Then you did not have to go back to class four to study again. Similarly if you want to solve the problem of mind and matter you need to go one step higher. Whenever you want solution for some particular problem you have to go one step higher.
If you have any problem in this world, any problem, any problem related to your body, for example lots of people come to us asking about the problem of Brahmacharya. If you have a body, you will always have this problem of Brahmacharya. If you really have to get out of this sex idea you have to get out of the body idea. Unless you get out of the body idea, how can you get out of sex idea? Unless you can get out of your body idea, how can you get out of the idea of hunger? Body and hunger are related, body and sex they are related. Body and want are related. This is the problem with modern day teachers. They don't tell the truth. When you listen to these popular speakers when they are talking about how to control your sex drive, no one can control till you think about your body. You can never control your ideas, sex ideas, hunger ideas, or want ideas you can never as long as you think you are a body. And that is why India talked about the four purusharthas, Dharma, Artha, Kama, Moksha. It said that the desire to gain wealth is a valid option. Desire to enjoy is a valid option. There is nothing wrong with it. Because your mind has identified itself with the body. Now if you want to get rid of the duality of mind, mind and matter you need to go beyond it. That is pure consciousness. That is something , by their very nature western religions cannot go. Why? If you ask me why they cannot, because in western religion and western science is based on western religion, middle east religions God created the body and breath spirit in it. Worse, it took a rib out of Adam's body and created a female. So females are permanently inferior to male. Whatever they may say, it is their scriptural fact. No question of quarrelling, no question of fighting over it. Now you have spirit, you have mind , you have body and these are three different things. So that creates a total confusion. Even persons like Roger Pennrose when he is writing about consciousness, they are basically talking about the will of mind. The volition aspect of mind. Mind wills, mind feels, mind has sensations so they call that consciousness. Now for us, all those things belong to mind. We shall see in future talks how Advaita looks at sensations.
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29. One becoming many

As we started the third chapter of Mandukya Karika, we found that upasana of any kind - worship of God is compared to being miserly (karpanya) , inferior.

We had detailed the reason. Problem is that we think that we can master spirituality just by reading a few books, by listening to a few talks. It is not that easy. Particularly in India, particularly followers of Hindu religion and more than that Vedanta, understand it the least. It may sound very harsh. But those who profess to be a Vedantin, most of them don't really understand that Vedanta gives a complete picture.

When Mandukya is saying that worship of God in any form is inferior, it makes the idea very clear what exactly it means to say. It is saying it is inferior. If you say that your Ishta, your God, Krishna, is Brahman you are one with Brahman and here in this creation God and you are different but Tattatah, in essence you are one. There is nothing wrong with that worship. The problem is when you think that God is separate and you are separate and you can become Brahman by worshipping something which is separate from you. See, the argument itself is so subtle that many will miss it.

So first Gaudapada criticises that attitude and then he comes up with what Vedanta truly is. We proceed with verse no 2.

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अतो वक्षाम्यकार्पण्यमजाति समतां गतम्।

यथा न जायते किंचित् जायमानं समन्ततः ॥ Karika 2॥

Therefore I shall now describe that (Brahman) which is free from limitations, unborn and which is the same throughout; and from this, one understands that it is not (in reality) born though it appears to be manifested everywhere.

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I shall now describe Brahman, says Gaudapada. Brahman is unborn, and Brahman is the same throughout. Now this is very important - same throughout - and free from any kind of limitation and any kind of narrowness. From this one can understand that Brahman does not in reality pass into birth in the slightest degree though it appears to be manifest everywhere.

To remind you this chapter is all about presenting Advaita philosophically. Some of the ideas that we discuss may appear a bit subtle, but not really difficult.

Now, creation is a very big mystery and such a big mystery that everyone, from child or grown up person, an aborigine to a philosopher, scientist, religious person, everyone wonders who I am, where I have come from, where will I go etc. What is the answer? It depends on your outlook, and what kind of philosophy you follow. If you are a materialist, you will answer in one way, if you belong to a particular religion you will answer in another way, if you are Vedantin, you will answer in an absolutely different way.

Here we are discussing Vedanta. Those who follow certain religions including Vaishnavism, those who are Vaishnavas, they will say, creation is God’s will and you cannot question their God. If you question their God it becomes a sacrilege. Though when you say God’s will, is it

really any explanation? This reminds me of a joke. While solving Trigonometric identity problems in school days, where we had to prove Left Hand side to be equal to the Right Hand side. Jokingly we used multiply both sides and bu Sin 0, making both sides zero and hence solving. But with this fallacious method one can prove any mathematical identity, just by multiplying by zero. God's will is that, multiplication by zero. You are mischievous because of God's will. You are good because of God's will. Why is everything wrong? That too God's will. That makes God's will almost like multiplying by zero.

Vedanta does not behave that way. Gaudapada after saying that is worship of God, God the way you understand, is inferior, proceeds to explain wholeheartedly the nature of Brahman, which is unborn. So if you are Brahman you are unborn. Brahman is the same throughout, never changes and free from any kind of limitation. I have this limitation of body, I have this limitation of mind. I am not Brahman. And that is what Vedanta also says. As body you are not Brahman, as mind you are not Brahman. Only as Atman you are Brahman. In no other way are you Brahman. And so from this simple statement one can say that this reality, Brahman, never passes into any kind of birth, even to the slightest degree. So, Acharya Shankar explains certain points - says that the terms here are Ajati and Samata. Ajati is that which is not born and Samata is sameness Why there is sameness? See the logic that Vedanta follows.

Today somebody wrote to me on one of those social media sites about Valmiki Ramayan. Said he likes to follow things logically. So I replied do you mean to say Valmiki Ramayan is an illogical work? See how ignorant the modern generation is. Ignorance is masked only by their arrogance. Do they even understand what logic means? Have they studied any book on logic? Do they think that everyone born before him was illogical? Acharya Shankar writing thirteen fourteen hundred years ago says why Brahman is the same everywhere. He says lack of sameness, inequality is only when there are parts involved. If there are parts involved there will be some kind of inequality. Anything that is composed of parts, for example my body is composed of parts. And your body is also composed of parts. So your body will be different from my body. This pen is composed of parts - body, clip, cap, refill etc. So it is not the same everywhere. But Brahman has no parts. So since Brahman has no parts it is the same everywhere. It is actually a very simple and profound argument. Inequality, Vishamata (Sanskrit word for inequality is Visham, Sham and Visham) is only when there are parts. So in this world there will always be inequality. When my marxist friends talk about equality they do not even realise what a stupid sentence or a stupid idea that they are coming up with. Then they will of course put certain conditions, this and that. There can never be equality in the world, because this world is made up of parts. The world has parts and because it has parts there will always be inequality. There can never be sameness. Sameness can be only at the level of spirituality. Not even in devotion.

Even in Bhakti literature, even when you reach the highest, if you reach Lord Krishna, there will be different kinds of mukti. Three different kinds of Mukti - Salokya, Sarupya and Samipya. In Salokya, after material liberation one goes to the loka (heaven) where the Lord resides, Sarupya, where the one takes the form of the Lord and achieves formal identity of the Lord, and in the case of Samipya one resides near the supreme Lord. So the differences remain.

If you study other religions and study their concept of Heaven, you will see that they have different kinds of levels, different kinds of Heaven, So in bhakti inequality remains. I may practice devotion as much as I like, but my devotion can never match the devotion of say Radha. Radha is the ultimate in devotion. So, you cannot say that Radha and I will become the same in the eyes of the Lord, as far as devotion is concerned.

Only Vedanta talks of equality, only Vedanta talks about sameness. The reason is neither ideological, nor philosophical but pure logic. There are no parts, and there being no parts there is no inequality. So something that does not have any parts how can that be born - simple argument. That is the same. By definition Brahman has no parts and if there is no part how can it ever be born? Because only that is born, only that is created which has parts. So Brahman is neither born, nor is there any kind of inequality nor does it have any part. I hope the idea is clear. But then how then one appears as many? It all sounds so wonderful, so fantastic. Brahman is one, I am Brahman but what about this multiplicity? And how that one becomes many whether it be appearance or be equal, whatever it may be. How do you link this many to one?

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आत्मा ह्यकाशवज्जीवैर्घटकाशैरिवोदितः।

घटदिवच्च संधातैर्जातावेतन्निदर्शनम् ॥ Karika 3॥

Atman may be said to be similar to Akasa (ether) manifested in the forms of the Jivas (embodied selves) which may be compared to the ether enclosed in pots. Again, as pots etc., are said to be produced from Akasa (ether) , similarly (gross) bodies are said to be evolved from Atman, This is the illustration of the manifestation (from Brahman, if any)

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Atman which is like Akash, is said to be manifested in the form of Jivas.which may be likened to the Akasas enclosed in pots. The body is also said to be manifested from Atman, just as a pot and the like are created out of Akasa. This is the illustration regarding the manifestation of Atman. Gaudapada uses one illustration and from that illustration philosophy will begin.

There is Akasa, there is Ghatakasa - Space infinite , space limited respectively.The term Akasa is used in two different senses. One is space and we all have that idea of what space is. However when you go by Samkhya Philosophy, when you go by Yog philosophy, when you go by Vedanta philosophy Akasa is the first clearly manifested matter. We have

discussed earlier how Samkhya philosophy works. According to Samkhya Philosophy there is pure consciousness and there is energy. This energy has three varieties - Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. It is pure energy. The term they use is Guna - Qualities. When consciousness comes near energy the balance of energy gets disturbed. The first thing to be manifested is the cosmic mind. So the cosmic mind is a kind of energy, a kind of matter but it is not the matter the way we understand.

The first thing when the mind starts working is the sense of I-ness, Ahangkar. Do not confuse these things with our local languages. Sense of I-ness. With this the ball starts rolling and one thing will lead to another like a chain reaction that happens in an atomic bomb. In an Atomic bomb, when there is a pile of radioactive material, say Uranium, and a trigger is switched on,, a neutron goes and hits the nucleus of an atom. When it hits a nucleus two neutrons are released. Since the neutrons are electrically and magnetically neutral, one does not know which direction they will go. They become loose cannon balls going randomly and hitting the more nucleus in the pile. So two neutrons become four, four becomes eight and eight to sixteen and it goes on. The pile is made in such a way that whatever direction the neutrons go, they will hit more nuclei. But much of the pile remains unused. So whenever there is an atomic explosion not even 40% of the material is used because neutrons are loose, they just go in any direction. Neutrons hitting the nucleus and they releasing more neutrons, they hitting more nucleus, it goes on. The balance has been disturbed. And this is the chain reaction that sets in. So never disturb the balance of someone. You don't know, chain reaction may begin and once the chain reaction begins, it becomes uncontrollable.

Prakriti behaves something similar on this line. Prakriti becomes uncontrollable. So there is mahat (cosmic intelligence), ahamkara and then comes the matter as we understand. And this matter has some property. First to be produced in Akasa. So Akasa is the mother of all elements. And Akasa gives birth to the other four (Vayu, Agni,Jala, Prithivi) ,and then they combine and recombine just like neutrons moving around. And then we have five gross elements. Five gross elements that are taken in by our five sense organs. They do not care about Hydrogen, oxygen, nitrogen carbon because whatever atom , whatever molecule, whatever chain of molecules and chain of atoms, ultimately they will be taken in by us through our five senses and that is why they talk about only five elements and these five elements contain the five properties of Akasa, Vayu etc. (Akasa, Vayu, Jala, Agni, Prithvi) Now wherever there is Akasa there is Akasa, it is a very interesting statement. Wherever there is Akasa, wherever there is particle, wherever there is particle, Akasa there is space. So, space and matter are related. Those of you who are interested more, you can listen to our Nasadiya Suktam talks, we have that in Bengali, we also have that in English. Those of you who have some idea of Physics would know that in earlier times we did not have a very

clear idea about what is space and what is matter. When Newton came he put it mathematically, this is space and this is matter. Matter is something that can be kept in space. And matter is something that needs space. It requires space. Now when Einstein came, the idea changed radically. During the time of Newton it was if you take all the matter out Akasa will have an independent existence. Space will have an independent existence. Einstein said that No, it is because of matter that there is space. That is space matter continuum and then he added time to that. Vedanta goes strictly by the principles of Einstein. Just imagine how long back our Rishis had that thought!

Wherever there is Akasa there is Akasa. First Akasa is finest form of matter and second is space. Wherever there is matter there is space. I hope the idea is clear that wherever there is matter, there is space. So are space and matter related? The question itself does not arise. What Samkhya and Yog and Vedanta say about space and matter? Their words are the same - Akasa, Akasa means matter and Akasa means space. Can you imagine such a profound idea!

Think of a bottle, an “empty” bottle. It will say that there is space surrounding it and there is space inside this bottle. Are these two spaces different? They are obviously not. If you can somehow destroy this bottle. What happens if this bottle can be destroyed? As far as Akasa is concerned, will this space inside it merge with the space outside? Well we can talk like that, but actually there is no merging because there is no division. There never was a division. The bottle itself is Akasa because it is Akasa the particle that divides the infinite sky, infinite space into the finite. Actually it is all infinite space, But because of the presence of this bottle, infinite now appears divided as finite. But is this division real? No it is not. This bottle itself is Akasa, the space inside it is Akasa, the space outside is Akasa. These three are one and the same. In Vedanta they say that Akasa is the best way to explain Atman. It is nearest to Atman, because all the properties of Atman that normally we discuss belong to Akasa.

Right now we are discussing the infinity of Atman that is being exemplified by this Akasa. The finite Akasa within this bottle and infinite sky outside are all one and the same. This is the relationship between Atma and Jiva. Note that they are not discussing the body. They are discussing the pure consciousness associated with the individual body. They are not discussing body, they are not discussing mind, they are not discussing ego, or any other thing. They are discussing pure consciousness. When we say that we have Atman, this is known as Jivatma - Atman identified with an individual is known as Jivatma. Gaurpada says Atma hi Akasavat - Atma is like Akasa. If you want to understand Atman with an analogy, the best analogy is Akasa. Akasa is the best word for Atman.Translating it as space, ether and or any other word will be confusing. Akasa means both space and ether, mother of all matter. Atman which is like Akasa, infinite, is said to be manifested in the form of Jivas.

Normally we say that it is in the form of Jivas. Like Akasa in a pot, in this bottle. And the body is also said to have manifested from Atman. Now this bottle is created out of Akasa, Akasa the matter. So you have three Akasa, one outside, one the bottle itself and one that is inside. So my body itself, this is Atman. What is within it is Atman. And what is totally outside is Atman. As regards the manifestation of Atman this is an illustration.

Acharya Shankar explains that creation as we understand, doesn't take place in reality that is - Paramarthata. The word that is used by Vedanta very often is Paramarthata which means "In reality". Because if the creation were to be real, then freedom will never be real, Mukti will never be real. We discussed it in the previous chapter. If the bondage is real, freedom can never be real. If the creation is real, freedom can never be real. Acharya Shankar says that this creation is not real. But for Samkhya it is real. That is where Samkhya and Vedanta differ.

Now we will be discussing lots of things and from this point onwards certain things will become a little subtle.

Things are born in the space, in Akasa, and actually they are Akasa, they stay in Akasa, and merge in Akasa. When this bottle is finally destroyed what will happen? It is born of Akasa, it is staying in Akasa and it will merge in Akasa. Akasa will remain as Akasa. Just like that all these earths, planets, moons and stars, are born in Atman, they stay in Atman, and they merge in Atman.

Shankaracharya says this illustration is meant for people with lower intellect. He said people with lesser intellect require illustrations to understand Atman. One who is sharp will understand the moment the teacher explains that Atman is Brahman. If you understand that readily, then you are ready for it. Otherwise various illustrations will be required. If you are of the worst kind, you will understand the opposite of what you are told.

We proceed to Karika 4

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घटादिषु प्रलीनेषु घटाकाशादयो यथा।

आकाशे सम्प्रलीयन्ते तद्वज्जीवा इहाऽऽतमनि॥ Karika 4॥

As on the destruction of the pot etc., the ether enclosed in the pot etc., merges in the Akasa (the great expanse of ether) , similarly the Jivas merge in the Atman.

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As on the destruction of the pot etc., the Akasa enclosed in them merge in the great Akasa so Jivas Merge in Atman.

Although this is not our topic directly here, the body is seen at three different levels. First is the gross body that we know of. Behind it there is the subtle body - subtle body consists of the mind and the senses. Not the organs, pure senses, which reside in the brain center. And the vital energies associated with my body, so it is not that by breathing or eating my strength will become the same as your strength. I have my own mechanism, you have your

own mechanism. So the five jnanendriyas, five Karmendriyas, five elements along with mind and intellect, these seventeen make the subtle body.This subtle body moves once this physical body disintegrates. Behind it is the causal body - Karan sharira. There is an I-ness that covers pure Atman. These are a bit technical and these are described in books like Vedantasar. That is not our discussion here. That is the mother of everything. Think of the idols that are made, say in Durga Puja. First is the wooden frame, then straw is put on it and then clay is put on that. Whatever ornamentation is there, it is done on the clay. Clay is like the physical body, the straw is like the subtle body and the wooden frame is like the causal body. Remove all three. What happens? Nothing! Space remains space. What are those three things? They are also space. Just like that it is the Atman itself that becomes the wooden frame, that becomes the straw and that becomes the clay. From the infinite Atman, from this infinite Akasa, the beautiful Durga idol comes out. We can understand that suppose for example we talk about ocean of matter. Those of you who know about the Big Bang and stars and explosions and black holes, you know how matter continuously keeps changing because energy is pushing that matter, energy is getting converted into matter, matter is getting converted into energy. Just like that we understand this ocean of matter, we understand this ocean of energy. So there is no problem in understanding Akasa, which is an ocean of everything and Atman is mother of all oceans. What Vedanta says is that these transformations, these are not real transformations.

In other religions creation is real. Even in Samkhya and Yog philosophies, creation is real. Now when somebody dies, the subtle body, 17 organs that I mentioned will leave the body and move and this body will disintegrate and will become part of some other body. Suppose you were to sit in front of me, you are breathing out and the breath I am taking in will be taking some part of the breath that you exhale. So I will be inhaling you and your body part will be becoming my body part. It is a biological fact. That is why people with whom you live, your body and mind become just like theirs. When you live in a monastery, your body and mind becomes like that of monks. When you are living in a household, your mind and body become like that. You are continuously inhaling that. Your body parts are moving away and being absorbed by other body systems. When you acquire devotion to Lord, what happens is that your subtle body breaks down and only the causal body remains. And now you are with God and you can enjoy that Heaven.What we mentioned in the beginning Salokya, Sarupya and Samipya. But the causal body remains and because the causal body remains it can create a subtle body and automatically there will be a physical body. So those who become gods like Indra and others, they have a similar subtle body that we have, just that the body over them is different. In our case the material used is more from earth material, not the physical earth, we mean the five elements and that is why you find our bodies start stinking if you don't take a bath, if you don't brush. Because earth, prithivi material is directly related to

smell. Now in case of the gods they have a subtle body and they also have a physical body. But that physical body is not ours. That physical body is what is suitable for their Heaven. When you go to Vishnuloka, or to Shivaloka, there also you get a body, it is just not the causal body, it creates a body which is suitable for that and that is how you enjoy God's love. So the body will always be there. Here on this earth it is this earthly body. In the Heavens there will be another kind of body and with God there will be a different kind of body because Karan Sharir, the causal body is there. Vedant you are continuing with the body, and if you move from one loka to the other, Suppose you are to fall from grace, we have this in Bhagavatam, story of Jay & Vijay who were the gatekeepers of Lord Vishnu. Which means they were in Vishnu Loka. And they were cursed by the four Kumaras. They fell from Heaven and they became Ravan and Kumbhakarna. So falling down from the grace of God , however favourite and dear to God you might be, it is always there. Adam and Eve fell from the grace of God. So don't you ever try to get the grace of God. Because even if God wants to save, a snake can come and poison you and you will fall down. You can annoy great sage and fall. So grace of God that cannot be the goal of life. Never!

Vedanta says that break down this causal body too. Now once the causal body is broken, take that example of Durga idol, if you break the wooden frame how can you make Durga again from that frame? You cannot. Those who make idols will have to now create an entirely new framework. And the old framework has been burned down.it is over, finished and gone.

No more you and no more me. So where does that framework (the causal body) go? Nowhere. It was Atman all along. It appeared as a causal body and then as a subtle body and then as a physical body. Through death the physical body went away, through devotion the subtle body went away and through knowledge the causal body went away. This is what Akripan means.

When Sri Raakrishna gave that beautiful vision actually it is there in the book called Kashikhanda, how liberation is acquired at Varanasi. Mother Parvati cuts the knots, meaning she releases you from all the bodies, the physical body has been released and you died. Now Mother Parvati has released the subtle body. How will the causal body go? It cannot go unless you have the knowledge, So Lord Shiva says look here is my infinite form. Now you have known.Since you have known the infinite form the causal body is gone. In the case of Durga idol, the wooden frame has to be broken down. In the case of the causal body, the moment you have the knowledge, it is broken. That is final liberation.

Vedanta will talk logically. It will use illustrations. But truth is not reached through illustrations. It is meant for inferior intellect. See I remember long ago it was 1987 or so, computers were still a novelty in India those days. At that time I used to work on dBase and there used to be MS-Dos and there was wordstar. So once I created a whole package to

mail our journal, Prabuddha Bharat to all the subscribers. It was a very nice package. In fact we kept on working on that package for many years.

Now one gentleman, a computer specialist from Chennai, who was also a devotee of Chennai Math,came to see some other package. He wanted to see the one I created. With just one look he understood the entire program. I am talking about say way back in 1987-88. I could believe that one could understand it so quickly. Now I know that computer programmers are like that. In those days it was surprising. Just one look at the entire program was enough for him to understand. For me it would have been difficult. I would have had to go through the entire thing to understand, as I was not a computer specialist. This is how sharp people understand things in just one sentence. Those who are not sharp, they need illustrations. Illustrations do not prove the truth. Illustrations are always meant for the inferior intellect. When we were in the lower classes in the school, the stories in the textbooks required pictures. When you grow up you don't need pictures or illustrations any more. When I wrote my book Junglezen Sheru, there were some illustrations in it. And the publishers send them to the editors. They were dead against it, They said, it is a very serious work and there should be no illustrations. Well, I hope you got the idea.

Vedanta says that it is all one and many is appearance. It just appears. This is maya. And that is why you have three kinds of bodies. Physical body, subtle body and the Causal body - . Known as Sthula Sharira, Sukhsma Sharira and Karan Sharira respectively. Just to mention, every system of religion, every system of Philosophy focuses only on Lingasharir, Karan Sharir. Wherever you find devotion, wherever you find about going to the Heaven , it is all about Karan Sharir. And this is where Hinduism, Vedanta differs from other religions, and philosophy of devotion. So comes verse no 5.

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यथैकस्मिन्घटाकाशे रजोधूमाधिभिर्युते।

न सर्वे संप्रयुज्यन्ते तद्वज्जीवाः सुखादिभिः ॥ Karika 5॥

As any portion of Akasa enclosed in the pot being soiled by dust, smoke etc.,all such other portions of Akasa enclosed in other pots are not soiled, so is happiness etc. of the Jivas, that is happiness, misery etc., of one of the JIva do not affect the other Jivas.

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Now you think of many pots, so there are many bottles like this and these bottles contain sanitiser or whatever it is. Another may contain water. So water from this bottle will not affect the sanitiser of that. That means in spite of having an infinite number of forms, one will not affect the other. Because other philosophies are now coming charging to Vedanta. Ok fine, if everything is one then your sin is my sin. Your virtue is my virtue. Your suffering is my suffering. Vedanta says No. It is not that. And then it counters Samkhya theory of creation and Vaisheshika theory of creation. We shall look at it in the next chapter.

30. Atman cannot be many

We shall again take up the 5th verse of the third chapter once again, because understanding Veda and Vedanta is quite difficult. Without a contemplative mind, without contemplation it is very difficult to understand and grasp the ideas. It is rather impossible to grasp these subjects just with intellect, because we are not discussing matters of the intellectual world, but of much higher and deeper subjects. Only in the silence of the mind, quietness of the mind, spiritual truths bubble up.

In the previous chapter Atman was compared to Akasa. Akasa, which is sky, which is space, and as many divisions might be there in Akasa depending on different objects, Akasa never gets affected. Sri Ramakrishna beautifully explained that if we put a stick on a water body, say a pond, we see water on both sides of the stick, as if the water is divided. But is the water really divided? It is not.

There is space and there are objects and space is enclosed in that object. A better way of understanding is to think of buckets, say ten buckets, now each bucket will have some space. This is what body and mind is in relation to Atman. The way you have buckets, in an open field. Now does this space get divided into those ten? If you keep ten containers in a room, is the space inside the rooms really divided? Not at all. Here lies the crux of Vedanta. And as we shall see, Vedanta has nothing to do with intellect. Vedanta has nothing to do with the mind. We try to understand Vedanta with the help of mind and we fail to understand and get confused.

Now think of ten jars. If the water in one pot gets dirty, soiled, will this affect the overall space? Obviously it will not. Many schools of thought and particularly Vaishnavas oppose this idea. In fact Vaishnavas are so orthodox that one can call them fanatics. They call Vedanta as Mayavad. But it has nothing to do with Maya. Vedanta says Brahman alone exists, Atman alone exists. So it is Brahmavad.This is what happens when somebody wants to malign you. They use words, which you don't even stand for. Words that you never spoke. During a quarrel one tries to put words in the other's mouth. In philosophy the same thing happens. The most common objection, even greats like Ramanuja and Madwacharya, objected to Advaita Vedanta exactly on this point. Point of Maya. That means one will be affecting the other. As if soiled water in one pot affects others.

Now, if All are the same, if me, you and everyone else, are the same, then if I get liberated, everyone else would get liberated. If I do something wrong then that will affect everyone else. This is the most common argument against Vedanta. In fact this argument has been used many times by different schools of philosophy. Swami Vivekananda, when he was in

America, was working on this and he tried to write down the points rationally explaining why it is that the liberation, mukti of one will not liberate others. So, later he wrote on this explaining the point. Acharya Shankar explained this in his way, Swamji explained in his own way. We are taking partly from Shankaracharya and partly from Swamiji. They are the masters, and we have to take help from them.

The basic objection by the philosophers, thinkers and quarrelsome people is, if Atman is one, if one person is liberated, everyone should be liberated. In fact worse, if one person dies, everyone should die. In fact Swami Vivekananda, uses this argument in a different way and says if you think yourself to be Atman then, the happiness of others should be your own happiness. But he is telling it as Sadhana.. Now when people criticise, they criticise entirely for different reasons This verse no 5 as we discussed in the last chapter we take up again

यथैकस्मिन्घटाकाशे रजोधूमादिभिर्युते। न सर्वे संप्रयुज्यन्ते तद्वज्जीवाः सुखादिभिः ॥ Karika 5॥

The dust, smoke etc soiling the Akasa enclosed in a particular pot, do not soil the other Akasa . You have ten buckets and now one particular bucket is filled with smoke and dust. That will not affect the other buckets. So also is happiness, misery etc of one Jiva does not affect the other.

Acharya Shankar writes a very beautiful commentary on this, but we will have to explain it slightly differently for ease of understanding. If there is only one Atman then happiness and misery of one should affect the happiness and misery of others. Like you might have heard, in the case of twins their minds are so intertwined that the feeling of one affects the feeling of the other. And there have been cases when one died the other one also did not survive for long. So is this something like that? The answer lies, the crux lies in a very simple fact that Atman is not mind. How much we try, it is practically impossible for us to make a distinction between Atman, the pure consciousness with mind. The distinction between them is understood only during deep meditation.

So people like Swami Vivekananda had insight into how Atman and mind are different only after meditation. Sri Rammakrishna of course had so many different kinds of spiritual experiences, spiritual sadhana and so he should not be brought into it, Happiness, misery, bondage liberation, all these things belong to mind, not to Atman.

The entire discussion here and a bit later hinges on this simple fact or a single dichotomy or a single contradictory feeling, and understanding. Is Atman the mind? All those who attack Advaita Vedanta with due respect to our greatest of the Acharyas, they all mistake Atman for mind. When they attack Advaita Vedanta actually they attack thinking that Atman is mind. With all humility indeed due respect to all the masters we are saying this. When it comes to scientists and wisecracks of society today, we need not worry about them. They are basically very shallow people. What Acharya Shankar does is that he takes up two systems

of philosophies and by attacking these two systems of philosophies, very distinctly shows how Atman is not mind and why these kinds of objections cannot be raised against Vedanta. Two philosophies that Acharya takes up are Samkhya and Vaisheshika. As we proceed the idea will become clear why Acharya Shankar has taken Samkhya and Vaisheshika. In the orthodox Indian philosophical system there are six schools of thoughts. First is Samkhya and then Yog, So answering Samkhya you are answering Yog. and third and fourth are Naya and Vaisheshika. They are twin philosophies. So if you counter Vaisheshika, you counter Naya as well. Then there is Mimamsa and Vedanta. So they don't bother to answer Mimamsa on these points. But as far as the issue of Atman and mind is concerned, if you can answer Samkhya and Vaisheshika you have answered every system of thought. Whatever your objection is raised regarding Advaita Vedanta, ultimately it boils down to mind. Is Atman the mind? We have been discussing this many times. Just please keep this thing in mind that whatever the objection against Advaita Vedanta, actually all these objections hinge on one single point that Atman is mind. They are thinking that Atman is mind. Acharya Shankar now attacks two philosophies, Samkhya and Vaisheshika and shows how Atman is not mind and their philosophical premises are flawed. If you can demolish these two Samkhya and Vaisheshika, you have actually effectively demolished every system of thought that attacks Advaita. Now we will just go through the main points of Samkhya and Vaisheshika and how Acharya Shankar counters them.

First we discuss Samkhya. Samkhya philosophy, which Swami Vivekananda termed as Mother of all Indian philosophies, treats consciousness, matter and energy as the same. In Samkhya philosophy, Prakriti is the mother of both matter and energy. Matter and energy are all the same. It is interesting to note that Einstein came much later with this idea that matter and energy are the same. But we have known all along that matter and energy are same. Samkhya says that there is matter and energy, let us call it Prakriti. That is a better word as everything is put in one single word. Matter, energy, mind all three are contained in one single word Prakriti or Pradhana. Pradhana means the head - the head of all creation. And there is consciousness which is called Purusha. Purusha and Prakriti have independent existence. They have permanent existence. That means energy and consciousness are independent. They always exist. There is no way that one will merge into the other. More importantly Samkhya says and consequently Yog says that there are an infinite number of Purusha. So energy is infinite, the number of Purusha is infinite. And that is how the creation goes on. When infinite of one, mixes with infinite of other you will have an infinite number of creations. That is a very simple argument.

Now, Samkhya is an extremely major philosophical thought. Those who are more interested in knowing about the Samkhya outlook and how Samkhya looks at energy, consciousness multiplicity of Purusha, you can listen to our Raja Yog talks.

Acharya Shankar first breaks up Samkhya and says, even the Samkhya system of thought admits that misery etc do not belong to Purusha. What Samkhya calls Purusha Vedanta calls Ataman. Swami Vivekananda had very famously said that Samkhya and Vedanta are similar. Acharya Shankar in his commentary on Gita says that when it comes to elaborating the process of creation and details of creation, Samkhyas is very good. But when it comes to talking about the ultimate reality, Samkhyas are not good. By Samkhyas I mean, followers of Samkhya. That includes Yog. Now if you study Samkhya and Vedanta side by side, you find that there is just one step missing. Everything that Samkhya talks about Purusha, Advaita Vedanta talks the same about Atman. Whatever Samkhya discusses about Prakriti, Advaita Vedanta accepts it in entirety. Just one single point goes missing between Samkhya and Advaita. God knows why Kapil Muni who founded the Samkhya System of thought missed that. Maybe he was trying to work out a practical philosophy. Because both Samkhya and Yog are extremely practical philosophies. India has not produced a more practical philosophy than Samkhya and Yog. And that one single step is multiplicity of Purusha. Samkhya says Purusha are infinite in number. Advait says Atman is one and only one, effectively negating the independent existence of matter, energy and mind. Actually it is a very simple argument. It takes little time to understand. But once you understand, it is one of those eureka moments. What Advaita Vedanta says by one, is that it is neither subject nor object. Because the moment you say eternal subject eternal witness, you are talking about actually two. I have seen many of these Vedanta speakers , when they talk about eternal witness, Sakshi, the idea that is formed in the mind of the listener is always of two, because when you are witnessing something it will always be a sight. Without a sight you cannot have a witness. That is what Vedanta says, whatever is, is. There is no mind, you cannot go on telling subject and object and all that. So Vedanta basically rather effectively gets rid of matter, energy and mind. We will have more of it in the next verses. So does this solve the problem of Samkhya. No. Rather it complicates the matter. As we have been seeing from the very beginning it complicates the matter massively because the moment you say that Atman alone exists, Samkhya will always have a problem of multiplicity. Where does this multiplicity come from? And is this multiplicity real or apparent? If you say real, actually people admit it to be real, people think it to be real like Christianity or Islam or Judaism or even Vaishnavas they all accept it to be real. But that even a Kid can say. Even a small boy knows that he and the universe are two different things. Why do you need philosophy to know that? And of course whenever there will be two, there will always be a third to control that. The moment you bring in mind, there will always be two, subject and object. And there will be the third - God the ruler. You don't need philosophy for this. It is very simple logic. Because if two are to be put together, if two are to be joined together you always need a third force. If there is a subject and object, you will always need a God. And that is why ,

whatever science may say, whatever these wisecracks may say, whenever you have subject-object duality there will always be a need for God. And this is where some of these basic religions prey upon their followers. That made Marx say religion is the opiate of society. But why do you need philosophy to know this?

What Advaita Vedanta says is that well, it appears to be many but actually it is not many. The whole argument is based on this.

Every time modern science tries to explain consciousness, it is mostly trying to explain the volition aspect of the mind. Emotional aspect of the mind. That is the ultimate that they can think of. And they don't understand consciousness. It is beyond them. It is beyond any Christian or any follower of Abrahamic religion to understand what consciousness is. And anything that is based of Abrahamic religion, is impossible for them to grasp what consciousness is. I may sound a bit firm in my understanding, strong but I am correct.

Now Shankaracharya does not even answer those people. He says Samkhya! Samkhya itself says, Kapil himself says that Atman is not affected by misery etc. So the allegation that the misery of one will affect the misery of others, it does not stand. Now in Samkhya whatever is happening is done by Pradhana that is Prakriti. And whatever it does, it does for Purusha. But Purusha remains indifferent all the time, the witness in case Samkhya. Witness term is perfect because Purusha keeps watching the play of Prakriti. But not in Vedanta. So all these expressions like Sakshi etc are more real with Samkhya than with Vedanta. So says that Prdhan works for Purusha, but however this premise that Prakriti works for Purusha in no way explains why there should be multiplicity of Purusha. Actually this is a very interesting argument. The philosophy of Samkhya and the philosophy of Yog are similar. It is a very interesting argument that Achaarya Shankar uses. Samkhya gives all the reasons why Purusha and Prakriti are different and all those arguments you will find in Raja Yog. And how Purusha is not mind we have discussed in Raja Yog. So Vedanta does not go into the details of explanations. It just borrows one thing from a very powerful system of philosophy. You can listen to our Raja Yog talks to understand why consciousness is not mind.

Acharya Shankar, first uses his arguments and then demolishes Samkhya. This is known as Pradhana Malla. Pradhana Malla means chief wrestler. First you bring in the chief wrestler, the most powerful wrestler and use him to defeat all the wrestlers and then you go and defeat the chief wrestler. You don't have to go fight with each and every wrestler. He uses Samkhya, demolishes the idea that Atman can have any sensation. In the western science consciousness is all about sensation. In Vedanta Atman is beyond any sensation, yet is beyond consciousness. Now Vedanta says that there is no Argument, no premise in Samkhya and yog philosophies, to prove to tie up Pradhana with multiplicity of Purusha. If you are interested to understand religions, spirituality and religious philosophy of the Hindus,

you should listen to our talks on Gita. That Gita harmonises the philosophy of Samkhya with the outlook of Vedanta, where it says that God alone has become both. The higher Prakriti and lower Prakriti. Lower Prakriti is mind , higher Prakriti is consciousness residing in each Jiva. That means pure consciousness itself that becomes both mind and consequently matter and energy and remains as embodied consciousness within all. But that is a different topic.

So Shankaracharya said that arguments offered by Samkhya does not prove in any way how presence of Pradhana requires multiplicity of Purusha. There is no special argument in Samkhya Philosophy to prove this multiplicity of Purusha. Here Samkhya makes a mistake, in fact in Raja Yog you will find that first it counters the idea that mind is consciousness, and then says there are infinite Purusha. Why? Otherwise if one gets liberated, everyone gets liberated. This is a very interesting argument, because Samkhya who demolishes every other system of philosophy on the basis of mind, itself lands in that trap.

According to Advaita Vedanta, bondage and liberation both belong to mind and not Atman Because Atman is ever free. In fact Samkhya also says Purusha is ever free. Purusha feels as if she is trapped in Prakriti, this world, this universe goes on dancing on its own. Sri Ramakrishna gives a very beautiful example of this in a story form. When there is a marriage ceremony, the first lady of the family looks after everything and once in a while she comes to the head of the family to keep him informed, who is sitting and smoking his hookah. He just nods his head. This is the philosophy of Samkhya. Prakriti does everything and purusha keeps on watching it dance and gets entangled and starts thinking that all the dance is being performed by him. And finally when he gets bored of this dance, he says no more. The moment he says no more, he realises he was never into this. Now just see how Samkhya's outlook is absolutely the same as that of Vedanta. The problem lies only with multiplicity and oneness. Because the moment you get rid of multiplicity , the problem of this one related to multiplicity comes up. Now Acharya Shankar uses the argument of Samkhya and demolishes all those who consider mind to be consciousness. And then he says, in your own philosophy, Samkhya philosophy there is no reason to assume that simply because Pradhana is doing everything there will be multiplicity of Purusha. Actually there is none. And I know Raja Yog very thoroughly, I studied Samkhya, I know there is a weak point. I really wonder why a great sage like Kapil Muni went into this.

And Acharya Shankar says Samkhya has absolutely no other argument in support of multiplicity of Purusha. They have only one argument, which is that liberation of one will effectively liberate everyone else. Vedanta does not say that.

Atman gets liberated every time we say that I get liberated, every time we say that I want mukti, we don’t even understand what we mean by mukti. If your mukti is real, that means your bondage is real. If your bondage is real, you will again fall in bondage and there can

never be mukti for you. Anything that is real can never go away. Imagine, there is a husband and wife, who have a quarrel one day. If the quarrel is real, after some days the quarrel will start once again. But if you are not husband and wife there is no question of quarrelling. If a lady and gentleman are quarrelling, If they are not a married couple then they are not going to quarrel ever again. Because they will not be meeting ever again. But if they are a couple then the possibility of another quarrel is very much there. This is a simple argument. Nothing new. It is not rocket science. If your freedom is real, so if you get a divorce from your wife, the possibility of you getting married again and having the problem again and trying for a divorce again is very much there. Such a simple thing. So Acharya concludes that it is only through ignorance that people imagine Purusha to be many. Just to remind you that Acharya Shankar is not giving any fresh argument here. Fresh argument will come now after this. He is just using Samkhya as the Pradhana Malla, the chief wrestler to demolish every other system. That means if you want to know how a particular system has been demolished you will have to study Samkhya. That is why I said, if you listen to our Raja Yog talks the ideas will become clear. In brief, Samkhya is a very powerful system of philosophy, very clearly shows how, not only philosophically, it says that if you meditate in a particular method and you grow slowly you will see for yourself that you are separate from the mind and that whatever is happening, is just a sight and that you are not a part of it. There is no theory in it. There is no philosophy in it. It is a hard fact. So the most sound philosophy was taken and shown how they themselves have a loophole. They simply say that there is Prakriti , that is the conglomerate of matter, energy and mind. Whatever it does, it does just to appease the Purusha. To make it happy, to keep it entangled. Or just show its wares. When you go to a shop to buy something, the shopkeeper shows the variety of goods that he keeps. If it is not to your satisfaction, you leave the shop. Purusha is like that. But Prakriti being real, the possibility of Purusha getting entangled once again is very much there. Such a simple argument. But if you know through meditation that this game of Prakriti is all imagination, you will never be under bondage and naturally you are always free. So there is no question of freedom, there is no question of acquired freedom. So you can never again fall into this kind of imagination. It is over forever. It is like knowing that this part of the desert offers a mirage. Acharya now takes up Vaisheshika philosophy. Now Vaisheshika Philosophy is in some sense similar to modern day science, to modern day understanding, to modern thinking. Naya and Vaisheshika, they run on Padartha. Padartha means anything, anything that can be denoted by word. We have a talk on Hinduism series on Nyaya and Vaisheshika. But it is not really necessary. Viasheshika comes from the word vishesh. Their foundation of philosophy runs on the simple premise that anything that can be named is a padartha, is an object. They use the term padartha. Padartha is the ultimate reality for them. Now they say the reality is Drabya, which means matter. Drabya possesses both qualities (Gunas) and

Karma (action). Then comes Generality. It is something that is common in a group, like Cows have two horns, this is generality. And there is,particularity known as Vishesh. This is speciality - speciality of an individual substance. Then there is relation. Relationship of a quality between one and the group These are not very important for us. Then there is Abhava. Abhava is non-existence. Now we are not going into details of all these.
Acharya Shankar has said, to contradict the relationship between mind and Atman just that much will do for us. Now Samkhya says that misery,happiness etc do not belong to Atman and Vaisheshika says that desires etc are inseparably related to Atman. Shankaracharya picks up his argument here. He picks up two philosophies where they are opposed to each other. Samkhya says misery, happiness etc do not belong to Atman, and he demolishes them.
Now he picks up Vaisheshika who believes that misery, happiness etc are integral and intrinsic to Atman. The way modern science feels. So when science is today discussing this problem of consciousness we have handled this long back. Naya & Vaisheshika both talk of Atman as having these qualities of happiness & misery. So liberation is real for them. And mukti is real for them and bondage is real for them.
Sanskara, the impressions (Yog uses sanskara a lot) are the cause of memory. Now what is Memory? Because I have impressions. I come across some experience, that experience leaves an impression. It goes in the subconscious. Freud did lot of work on that. When the opportune moment comes, that impression, it is like the computer virus, virus stays there and when the right time comes, right opportunity comes, it strikes and shuts down the entire system. Here it does not shut down, but the memory comes and it can flood you. When you are free, when you meditate, when you pray, some particular thought, some particular series of thoughts can disturb you, they come and occupy your space, why ? you have certain very powerful impression related to that. You will find that certain recurring dreams coming to you. Some particular kind of dream. Why? Because there are certain impressions. Freud combined these things and became famous. But in India we have known all these things since ages. Now Freud bases everything on this life. But we believe in past lives. We have been accumulating these impressions for thousands of births. They all stay within us as impressions. And sometimes they continue to guide us, goad us simply as impressions and sometimes they come up in dreams, sometimes in memory. The memories are the most powerful ones and dreams are the less powerful ones. These samskaras mould our habits, our tendencies, at the subtlest level. Now what Acharya Shankara says is that, memory cannot have an inseparable relation with Atman as Vaisheshika says. That would mean it is in the nature of Atman to have sanskara, to have karma. Acharya Shankara says, because you say that this sanskar is related to Atman. In that case memory and sanskar are related depending on what kind of impression you have, you will have that kind of memory. Now

Atman has no parts, Atman is one solid block. Right now we are not even going into multiplicity or singleness of Atman. We are just talking about not having parts. The mind has many parts. Earlier we did not understand it. Now because of neurology we know that the mind indeed has parts. Atman has no parts. If Ataman has no parts then, happiness, misery of one will affect the happiness and misery of others. So the happiness and misery of one will affect the happiness and misery of others according to Vaisheshika philosophy. unlike in Vedanta.

I tell you, I feel stunned when I see scholars and philosophers still talking about Dvaita and Vishishta Advaita, What rot! such a simple argument! If you believe that for example western science believes in feelings as consciousness. Consciousness being one, It does not have any part. As consciousness does not have parts, happiness and misery of one will affect the happiness and misery of others. Now if the origin of memory lies in contact with Atman, then memory of all things will come simultaneously. But we know that memory does not come simultaneously. That means it has to belong somewhere else. Where does it belong? Memory actually belongs to the mind which has parts. Mind is compound. Atman is not a compound. Atman by its very definition is not a compound. Because Atman is not a compound, it cannot be a receptacle of memories. So the very premise of Vaisheshika is wrong. This is one reason why Vaisheshika could not become popular in India. The credit goes to Acharya Shankar who demolished the idea of Vaisheshika. But the same idea is now taken up by the western science.

Now Atman is ever present as per Advaita Vedanta. Atman is consciousness. So it is a mere effort of the mind to remember anything. If you just think, all the memories will come to you. Of where ? I am sitting here. I want to know what is happening in America, I will know what is happening in America, because it is all one. If memory belongs intrinsically to Atman then you will have memory of the entire universe coming simultaneously. And not only that , not one, as Atman is indivisible, without parts, all the beings should remember a thing at the same time. If I remember something, you will also remember the same thing. If I explain something, you will understand the same thing simultaneously. And Atman being without parts, one should remember that all things at one and at the same time. So no rule will exist for memory. Argument is actually very simple. Mind is complex and if the mind is complex and if the mind is the repository of memory then the way memory works is perfect.. But the moment Vaisheshika and like modern western science you push memory as a dharma of Atman then this problem comes. You will remember all the things and everyone will remember all the things and all the memories will come at the same time. But this does not happen. Acharya Shankar concludes, mind can never be related to the Atman which is devoid of all sensations. By very definition Atman does not have any sensation. It is the mind that experiences sensation. So Atman is completely class apart from the mind. When we are

talking about memory, when we are talking about sensations these things belong to mind. In our first chapter it has been stressed repeatedly that Atman is pure consciousness. It doesn't go through sensations. It is like pure light. If you apply some coloured glass, some coloured cellophane the light will appear coloured. Actually light is not coloured. As far as Atman and mind are concerned they are completely class apart. Mind is finite, mind is with parts, Atman is infinite, Atman has no parts. So two systems of philosophy, Samkhya and Vaisheshika were brought in. Samkhya was brought because Samkhya does not accept sensations etc belonging to Atman, Vaisheshika believes these to be the characteristics of Atman. Acharya Shankar demolishes both. He says that if you accept that desires, happiness etc which have a beginning and an end belong to Atman, then Atman itself will become impermanent. But by definition, Atman is permanent. So there is a contradiction. On the one hand you say that Atman is permanent and you are pushing happiness, misery desires etc on Atman as its characteristic. But we know that sometimes we are happy and sometimes we are not happy. So happiness has an origin, it has an end, so Atman will have an origin and will have an end. But that is not acceptable. And if you believe that Atman has parts just to accommodate memory as an integral aspect of Atman, well then Atman will also change like a body, the way the body keeps changing, Atman will keep changing. Then the defects of the body will always be there with Atman. So Atman will become something like the body. Sometimes you are treating Atman as mind, sometimes you are treating Atman as body and we always miss to see Atman as Atman. What is the conclusion? Atman is infinite, Atman is one solid block like Akasa, space. Now if you keep different parts Akasa appears to be divided. Even in that case the defects of one do not affect the entirety and do not affect others. As we proceed, these ideas will come again, and things will become more clear.

31. Multiplicity is Unreal

We have already shown how Mandukya Karika is contradicting the Samkhya and Naya Philosophies. We discussed in detail what is Samkhya theory and what is Naya. For us the important thing is to consider that matter has an independent existence and so you cannot have one unified consciousness is unreasonable. Advaita Vedanta talks about the presence of only one Atman.

Our common sense says that there is multiplicity of Atman. And Samkhya and Yog philosophies also believe that. Also we have Dvaitavada, which also accepts multiplicity of ATman

Mandukya Karika picks up Samkhya and says if Prakriti, the sumtotal of matters and sumtotal of energy is the real thing,how does it prove that there cannot be one unified consciousness? And indeed in Samkhya theory there is no other argument that can counter this.

We discussed that in detail and we are not going back to that. And then Mandukya Karika contradicts the idea that Atman is connected with the mind. Because if Atman connected with mind that creates a lot of complications which we detailed in the previous chapter. Also in chapter 29 we discussed that space - Akasa, it is all one single unified Akasa. And yet there are tubs, there are glasses and there are pots and the space enclosed in all those containers appear different. But does that affect the ultimate space? No. Ultimate space remains the same. Just like that there is only one Atman.

Now when we say one Atman, we are talking from our standpoint. Actually you can't even say that there is only one Atman. And we have discussed it many times. There is no multiplicity. When you say there is no multiplicity it does not mean that it is one. Essentially it means there is no mind. Because the idea of 1,2,0 etc comes from my mind, and there is no mind. Advaita is not about one, Advaita is about negating the mind. Now things like matter, the world, space, time, emotions all belong to mind. If the mind is negated, everything else is negated. What is mind. Just a superimposition, this is what we will be discussing here. This part has to be self-understood. No one else can make it clear. Let us repeat the example of Sri Ramakrishna explaining Vedanta to Swami Vivekananda

He said that there are ten pots and the Sun is getting reflected, so how many suns are there? Eleven answered Swamiji, one up there and ten in the pots. And you go on breaking the pots till one remains. How many suns are there ? Two and you break the last pot, how many Sun is there? He said one. Sri Ramakrishna said No, what is there cannot be expressed. Now imagine, Swami Vivekananda himself could not grasp the idea of Advaita, initially. When I first read this incident in the Gospel, I just could not make head or tail of it. But please don’t feel disheartened. Even Swami Vivekananada had difficulty grasping it initially. I also could not make head or tail of it, when I read this for the first time. Keep in mind, when we are discussing Advaita, we are not discussing one, two zero etc., but we are discussing absence of anything other than pure consciousness, absence of anything other than Atman, absence of anything other than Brahman. Brahman, Atman, consciousness, awareness, all are the same. Sometimes awareness is used in the sense of the mind. But here I hope you understand what we mean to say.

Pure consciousness is all powerful, obviously because it is consciousness and its most potent, most powerful tool, or whatever you call it weapon is maya. Maya means it can create superimposition upon itself. The moment superimposition is created, first it appears as one, then as two and then as many. When you say God alone exists you are talking

about one. When you say Shiva Shakti, now two and then you say Siva Shakti and Jiva you have multiplicity. All this is the work of Maya. Now if you ask me personally, although I have not read it anywhere, I know this to be true. I will caution you again. I have not read it anywhere, but it must be somewhere here and there, but it is not that consciously in my mind. Consciousness is of the nature of consciousness, as you can understand intuitively. What it produces is not Maya or anything like that. It just produces awareness. Consciousness and there is awareness, which is simple. And because there is awareness, awareness implies mind, this awareness which we call mind is maya. And now the way when you are sitting quietly and imagining things or when you are sleeping and dreaming things, that consciousness keeps on imagining things upon itself. And this is the world, this is everything.

What is Maya then? Maya is mind. And that is the simplest way to explain it. But that is from the standpoint of Atman. When we are talking from our standpoint, the picture changes. It is very very difficult to understand these spiritual truths from the standpoint of Atman. However popular talks of Advaita be, it is very difficult to look at the world, look at multiplicity from the standpoint of Atman. We always look at things from our standpoint. And we look at God also from our standpoint . So this requires mental training, this requires being with the scriptures. Most importantly this requires thinking. Unless you start thinking for yourself, unless you start applying your mind fully to it, It will be difficult for you to grasp. Because you can go on reading a number of Upanishads, you can read the Vedas and anything you wish, ideas will be clear only when it comes from within. So how is it possible that there is only one Atman and yet their behaviours are different? See, Mandukya Karika is struggling, making every effort to make us understand that there is one unified consciousness and multiplicity that we see is of name and form. And name and form that itself are superimposed and being superimposed they are false.

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रूपकार्यसमाख्याश्च भिद्यन्ते तत्र तत्र वै।
आकाशस्य न भेदोऽस्ति तद्वज्जीवेषुनिर्णयः ॥ Karika 6॥

Though form, function and name are different here and there yet this does not imply any difference in the Akasa (which is one).The same is the conclusion (truth) with regard to the Jivas

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The form, function and name, essentially name and form are different here and there, yet this does not imply any difference in Akasa, which is one. The same is the conclusion with regard to the Jivas. Here the analogy is being brought. This is an analogy. And please remember that this analogy is being used not to prove some point. He sages who have gone into the depths of meditation, those who had nirvikalpa samadhi, those who have known the truth, they have seen that unified consciousness and they are giving us examples and the

best example that we can have in this world is of space. Akasa is the technical term for that. Akasa is not only space, but Akasa is essentially the finest form of matter in Hindu tradition. So, Akasa, space is unified and yet, because of the presence of objects, it appears divided. It appears to be confined in various objects. Jiva is the soul that resides within every living thing. Just like that, just like Akasa getting divided, Jivas appear multiple. The multiplicity in the world comes because of this. So Acharya Shankar explains that whenever you have pots etc. you do various kinds of things. Sometimes, say for example you carry water, you keep water, you hold water etc. So we find that although the space is one, unified, but because of different containers, their purpose changes. Their name changes, form changes and the purpose changes. However when it comes to the ultimate reality, does this space have the ultimate reality? Think of a bottle. There is one unified space here in front of the computer screen. And suddenly I bring in this bottle. It occupies space. Space is not divided.There is space outside it, space inside it. Now didn't this space get divided In reality? If this space got divided in reality it will get divided again again and again. But actually it does not get divided. There is just a superimposition. Break this bottle so what happens to this space that has been created here within the bottle. Nothing happens. No space was created, no space ever got destroyed. Space remained space. Honestly, I can only struggle to make it clear to you. Understanding of the subject has to come from within. If you start thinking, if you go a little deep, the idea will become crystal clear. It is not really that complicated. The space in the pot etc is superimposed. You bring in an object and space is created. Just like that, the Jivas, the individual souls, are mere name and form. Name and Form are technical terms they use. So what is this Samarpanananda? He is name and form. In reality this is pure Atman. Why don't we realise it? Because we don't believe in it. What don't we have all the qualities that Atman is supposed to have? We are pure consciousness, hence completely free and hence full of strength. But we don't believe in it. Do I believe in it? I don't think so. Did Sri Ramakrishna believe in it? There is no question of believing. He knew it. So why didn't he show his power? Because he was not a magician. If Bill Gates has a lot of money he does not go on showing every other person his bank balance. Only the poor will do it. Some people get some Yogic powers. And they go on showing it everywhere. People who are truly rich, they don't show off. People who are truly learned don't show off their learning. People who are truly spiritual, they do not show off their spiritual powers. We the stupid we think that if Sri Ramakrishna had power, why didn't he show it? Why didn't he change the world? Why should he change the world? Why? The world has an independent existence of its own. Why should he change? Why didn't he alleviate the misery of people? Why should he? Misery and happiness belong to the mind. Atman is beyond it. Why should he change it? But because people are suffering and Sri Ramakrishna came to uplift the masses towards spirituality, it was acknowledged. Because if you just remove the misery, misery will come

back, as misery belongs to mind. Till the mind is there, misery will come again and again and again. Swami Vivekananda had very famously said, if you pour the wealth of the whole of this country to India to one village, even that cannot take away the poverty of that village, till they learn to stand on their own feet. No prophet, no Avatar, no God can ever take away our problems, till we know how to get out of mind.

Now this is what Acharya Shankar explains. The way division in space is not real, just like that, the JIvatma, multiplicity of Jivatma is not real. What is that? Superimposition of mind. The common term for that is Maya. Maya is a common term used to express terms like mind, time space, events that are causations. All these things combined together is one single word, Maya. When you say Maya all these words are included in it. Traditional Advaita Vedanta does not go into such details. It is not needed. So this verse says that comparison with Akasa and says multiplicity of Jivas are superimpositions. It is just name and form. Name and form do not have the absolute reality. Every time Advaita talks about reality they say if it is real, absolute reality it has to exist in the past, present and future. Anything which was produced at some point of time belongs to Maya. And so this is not absolute reality. Jivatma is a product of Maya. So it is not absolute reality. There will be more discussion on this.

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नाऽऽकाशस्य घटाकाशो विकारावयवौ यथा ।
नैवाऽऽत्मनः सदा जीवो विकारावयवौ तथा ॥ Karika 7॥

As the ghatakasa (i.e., the ether portioned off by the pot) is neither the (evolved) effect nor part of Akasa (ether) , so is the Jiva (the embodied being) neither the effect nor part of the Atman.

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Vikar is some kind of transformation, some kind of change. Now when you look at the container, this bottle, how is ultimate Akasa related to this Akasa of this bottle? How is the unlimited Akasa connected with this limited Akasa of the bottle? Is it some kind of transformation? No it is not. Is it a part of that? Not even that. This division of Akas , this division of space is all mental. Think of a floor in your room and you draw a line with water. There is a clear division. You come after sometime and you find that the waterline has dried up. Now what happens to space? Well nothing had happened in the beginning, nothing has happened later. It was all in the head, mind. So called division of space is in the mind. So called multiplicity of Jivas, multiplicity of human beings in the head. It is not real. So Acharya Shankar explains the way infinite sky or unlimited sky has no relation with the limited one neither the transformation is some kind of transformation nor there is relationship as whole and the part.

We shall see as we proceed, Mandukya will demolish every kind of dualistic philosophy. That included Buddhism. In case of dualism, the division seems to be real. If you study

Vaishnava literature, although they have their own arguments, and they have great teachers like Madhwacharya, the greatest India has produced as far as philosophy and logic are concerned. The relationship between Brahman and Jiva is actually transformation. Jiva the individual can never be one with the universal. So the transformation is real. The Karika was written at least 700-800 years before Madhwa came and at least 500 years before Ramanuja came. Ideas which Ramanuja preached or those preached by Madhwacharya, can be found in a book " Bhakti Schools of Vedanta', written By Swami Tapasyananda and published by Ramakrishna Math, Mailapuruam. Tapasyanandaji, who was a great scholar, termed the thoughts of Ramanuja and thoughts of Madhwa as Bhakti school of Vedanta. Shankaracharya is Jnan school of Vedanta and they are Bhakti school of Vedanta. It is a very beautiful book. There practically every school of Vedanta has been discussed. In that Bhakti school of Vedanta, you realise the thoughts of Nimbarka, Ramanuja and Madhwa, and Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. So what happens is that here is that universal soul Atman and here is the individual. What is the possible relation that you can think of ? Here I am, Samarpananada. And there is Brahman, Sri Ramakrishna, God. What is the relationship between me and Him? And what is the relation between the Jiva that is inside me and Brahman? Naturally many possibilities are open. One possibility is they are eternally separate. That is what Dvaita philosophies say. Another possibility is that it is tree and leaf connected yet separate. Then there is Chaitanya Mahaprabhu's Achintya Vedaved. Then there is Shuddha Advaita, there are so many schools. And they are all about the relation between Jivatman and Brahman. This sloka negates that. It says that other than complete identity between the individual and the universal, there is no other relation. Neither there is a real transformation, nor is it the relationship of the whole and the part. In the relationship between Atman and Jiva, Universal and me, the universal has not evolved into me. In that case I am not a part of the whole.

Now we are studying Sastra. Shastra is trying to explain something which cannot be grasped by the mind. One has to go beyond the mind and try to feel what is there. Now how do I go beyond mind through mind? How can you jump out of yourself? You can jump a height, you can scale a wall, but you cannot jump out of yourself. So knowing something with the mind, which lies beyond mind is impossible. We have a galaxy of saints and sages, who have realised this and who have affirmed this. They go on giving different examples, go on giving different arguments to make this idea clear.

To understand better, take a torch light, throw the beam on the clear wall. Take a piece of cardboard, make holes, make designs, and bring in front of that light. Now images appear on the wall or on the screen. Now make that cardboard move, images will move. As in earlier days, we used to have projectors and film reels and movies go on on the screen. Now remove the cardboard. What happens? They all merge into one. Did the figures on the

screen merge into one? How can they merge into one when there was no figure? If you cannot grasp it, sit in silence for two flat hours. Thinking only of one example. light, cardboard with holes, the points appearing on the screen, figures appearing on the screen, first you make one hole and suddenly one point comes into existence. You say a dot has been created. And second dot, third figure, fourth figure like that, You go on creating. And then you remove the card. And it's all light. Neither there was creation nor there was merging. It was light all along. One unified light. What was playing the trick? The cardboard with holes. The mind is like that cardboard piece. The mind plays all these tricks. To understand this, I repeat, go and sit flat for two hours, just with this analogy. Think, was there any creation? Was there any dissolution? Was there any unification? There was none. What happened? Nothing happened. One card came. We are in this world and because we are in this world,we will have to take examples from this world. But from this standpoint of consciousness, what it does is that it simply becomes aware and that awareness is like that card. Card with holes. And it is like the film reel moving in front of light in the projector. Things are moving. When the reel is over then what happens? Only the projector light is there. What happened to all those characters who were dancing and singing, fighting wars and this and that? All merged into one light. Did they merge? No, because they never were. I will tell you my personal experience. I grew up in a village. When I was a young boy, I first saw a movie in some town. I was amazed. As luck would have it, the name of that hall was picture palace. So I kept arguing with my friends that I saw this movie at a picture palace which was real to me. I was very young, maybe 5 or 6, and they were convinced. I was convinced. Then we had a piece in our textbook, where they explained how a movie plays. About reels, and how they have frames that change bit by bit. I could not get any idea. And then by chance a toy and a short movie reel. And with this you could move that reel and see this story being played out in small clips. And I saw very closely from one figure to another there was very slight change. And when moved at a particular speed, they appear to be moving. I tell you it was such a big shock for me. Films, movies are not real. They are just like dead pictures, just like a series of pictures with slight changes they move before light and the whole thing comes alive. I was 8 or 9 years old then. It was a big shock for me as if my world came crashing down upon me. Such a big disappointment about movies. This is the relationship between God and creation. It is pure light. Using our terminology you place that reel and this bright universe comes into existence. Exactly what is happening? Nothing is happening. It is only pure light. So those of you who still have difficulty in understanding please sit in silence at least for two hours, do nothing. Close your eyes, sit silently, somewhere. And think. Torch light if need be , you take your phone, have a dark paper, make holes, keep playing and see how light blobs, points of light, take a cardboard they stay and they merge into the ultimate light when you remove that. Now you realise, neither there

was birth nor there was existence. And nor was there any dissolution. The light was way it was. It was the card playing in front of it. This is the reality between Brahman and Jivatma.

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यथा भवति बालानां गगनं मलिनं मलैः ।

तथा भवत्यबुद्धानामात्माऽपि मलिनो मलैः ॥ Karika 8॥

As the ether appears to the ignorant children to be soiled by dirt, similarly the Atman also is regarded by the ignorant as soiled

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As an ignorant person thinks that the sky is curved or the sky has got dirty, the space neither has any dust nor it is curved. Just like that ignorant people think that Atman is multiple, soiled , Atman is born, Atman dies. The ether, the space, appears to the ignorant children to be soiled by dirt (malin), curvature, (तलमलवत्), space appears curved. More interesting that I have used in my book Kratu, last chapter. You think that space is curved around you and you are at the centre of the space and when you move, this curvature moves. Because you always remain the centre of the universe. But this is true of other people also. Space remains curved around them also. Actually everyone is the centre of this universe. These things can never be fully clear with the help of our mind. No teacher, no book can make it clear. One has to make it clear to themselves. We need intuition and that comes through silence. Our sages realised this in their deep meditation. We can only understand these from the standpoint of Advaita. From the standpoint of dualism, it can never be understood

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There was a question asked by the listeners.

Question.

Where does the Atma go after death?

Answer:

If pure consciousness is undivided, how Atma passes from body to body? Atman does not go anywhere. Atma does not pass from body to body. Atma never passes anywhere. Atma cannot go anywhere. That which passes at the time of death is Jivatma. If I move the bottle, the space enclosed in the bottle is moving. But is Akasa the totality of space moving?It is not. So what is moving? Superimposed Akasa. Akasa that is enclosed in space. But is this Akasa enclosed in the space real? No, obviously not. So who moves where? Jivatma keeps moving from body to body, from misery to happiness, happiness to misery. Does Atman move anywhere? It doesn't move anywhere. It just cannot.

See the terms are different. Atman, Jivatman, and Dehatman which is the body. These are different terms. Do not get confused between space and space in this bottle. Space in this bottle can move but space in this bottle itself is an imaginary division of the master space.

Just like that Jivatma that is soul in Christian terms, that moves. For them the soul stays in limbo or suspended animation or whatever you call till there will be judgement day, So they say Rest in Peace (RIP) - May his soul rest in peace. Now Hindus don't understand anything, and started writing May his soul rest in peace. Hindu soul is never in agony. It is the Christian soul that is always in agony. They fear agony. What a wonderful religion we have! And we don't understand. Simply because it is written in English we accept it as truth. Once I was in my village. I used to study in a residential school. So, one elderly lady in the village had some pain in her hand. She had come to meet me, to see me and she saw tooth paste. She took a little paste and rubbed it on her hand. What are you doing? I asked. She said my hand is in pain, so I applied this cream. She had seen some time when she had some pain that some cream was applied. She could not distinguish between pain relieving cream and toothpaste. I laughed. I was young and stupid enough to laugh. This is our plight. We don't even understand what we are copying. Sri Ramakrishna said in Bengali "Babura jekale kheyechhe, shekale bhaloi hobe". There was a feast at the place of Zamindar. When workers and peasants came they were asked, will you take this particular preparation? They said, have the Babus, the gentlemen taken this? If they have taken it must be good. If it is written in English it must be good. So what is written in English? After death may his soul rest in peace. We also started copying it. Their soul stays tormented, in agony till there is the judgement day. Then they might be relieved or they might be sent to eternal hell. You might have stolen a mango and because of the sin, you might go to eternal hell. Or maybe they might send you to some correction centre, God knows what.

What happens in Vedanta which is the primary philosophy of the Hindus, this soul, the Atman which is being reflected in this body, is the reflected Atman. This is not the real Atman. Real Atman is the one infinite soul. So you cannot call it soul. The soul has to be transmigratory. Every time you use the term soul, it has to be transmigratory. It has to move. But Atman does not move. Swamiji used the word soul because people in the west did not understand Atman. Very often our learned monks make this mistake and they cannot distinguish between soul and Atman. Soul and Atman are absolutely different things. Atman which is associated with the mind or the mind that is associated with the soul that keeps moving. It is the mind that keeps moving. Not the soul. So, there is always birth and death of the body. There cannot be a body unless there is an embodied soul which is known as Jiva or Jivatma. Christians call it soul. It moves. But does it really move?No it does not. I mean does Atman move? No it cannot. Where will it move? It is infinite. Even if it wants to go , where can it go? Don't get confused between Atman and soul. These are absolutely two different things and when you import some idea, some word, from a different system and apply it here, there will be total confusion.

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32. Advaita looks at rebirth

We are in the third part of Mandukya Karika which is called Advaita Prakarana. Here arguments are used to establish Advaita. Initially when this Karika began it explained the Upanishad and established Advaita with the help of the Upanishadic statements. And one cannot question Upanishadic statements. We have explained why. Then came the analogies. And now comes the arguments.

Now we shall start verse no 9. Here Advaita raises an objection upon itself and negates the dualists . Other than Advaitins, everyone else are dualists. Every other philosophy of India, Buddhism, Jainism are dualism. Samkhya, Yog philosophies are dualistic. We have already seen how Mandukya has demolished Samkhya and Vaisheshika. Now it raises objections upon itself.

The next few verses will be discussing three important points.

The first objection is concerning rebirth. What about rebirth which is so thoroughly accepted in Hinduism? What about the Gods and Goddesses? There are Gods, there are Goddesses, they are different beings, they are different species, and there is that famous rebirth. What about that? How do you justify that?

The second objection that comes is pretty dangerous. Upanishads ask us to do Sadhna, spiritual practices. If Sadhana is not needed, if spiritual practices are not needed, why do you have those statements? Now the argument is very interesting. You say that, whatever you are saying is based on the Upanishads. The Upanishads themselves talk about Sadhna, spiritual practices. If there is only one who will worship whom? Some people who do not understand Advaita keep talking about themselves being God. One person tells me that he wants to take Mantra Diksha. He believes in Advaita and believes that no one is superior and no one is inferior. So he cannot understand from whom he should take Diksha.

These are absolutely misunderstood ideas. The notions are fully misplaced. Advaita never says things like this. What Advaita says, till you have the sense of duality you will have to behave as per the norms of the world.

Those of you listening to this talk do you have this perception that speaker Samarpanananda and the pen in his hand are two different things? If yes, then you are still in the realm of duality. Nothing wrong with it. Only thing is that till you are in duality, you have to behave according to the rules and injunctions as per dualistic mode. But once the idea becomes clear that it is all Advaita, slowly you should start moving towards Advaita. But how do you

move towards Advaita? With the help of dualism. Now we are trying to grasp Advaita with the help of our mind. But it is beyond my mind. This cannot be done.

But what about Sadhana? Why do we need to do dualistic Sadhana at least at the beginning. For example in the Pole vault, they take the help of the pole, make the great leap. Now while making that great leap you let go off that pole. That is the most crucial thing. You need the pole to jump and you need to let go of the pole to jump. So you need to take help from all that mind has to offer. And at the crucial time you have to let go of the mind. This is best understood byAdvaita Sadhana by Sri Ramakrishna. When Totapuri came and taught Advait Sadhana, Sri Ramakrishna was established in dualistic mode of worship. There is nothing wrong with the dualistic mode of worship. For him Mother Kali was everything. So when he was trying to meditate on non-dual consciousness, Mother Kali was continuously appealing before him. So he said, he can't do it. Totapuri then took a piece of broken glass, pierced it in between his eyebrows,and said focus here. Mother Kali came again. Basically what is Mother Kali ? when we are talking about Sri Ramakrishna, the highest manifestation of pure consciousness, Satchidananda, Brahma in the world of mind of Sri Ramkrishna. So someone who is a devotee of Sri Ramachandra. Maa Kali will not come before him. Sri Ramachandra will come before him. One who is a devotee of Sri Krishna, to him or her Sri Krishna will come. Mother Kali will not come. Why? Your mind is your empire of mind. It has nothing to do with the mind of others. Nor does it have anything to do with the cosmic mind. Your mind is your mind the way your body is your body. Now, from the very beginning you did sadhana with Mother Kali. So the last obstruction will be Mother Kali. If you do sadhana with Sri Krishna, the last obstruction will be Sri Krishna.

If you try to understand other religions, you will instantly understand why Prophets propose the name of God. The reason is that their kriya was that God. So for them Brahman, the pure consciousness appeared to him (why appeared to him, because mind is working) in that form.

Why are there so many religions? Why do religions differ? That difference does not lie with the religious masters. The difference lies with the followers of these masters. These masters would understand.If Sri Ramakrishna were to meet, say Lord Buddha, or say Lord Krishna, Sri Ramakrishna would never have any difference with Buddha or Krishna. He would know what is happening. It is the followers who have the problem. Because they do not understand how the world of spirituality works, in the world of mind. So, till you have the sense of duality till you understand two, you have to take help of this world.

What about rebirth? Is it true or not? What about Sadhana? Is it true or not. And more importantly Sadhana has been prescribed in the Upanishads themselves. And a much more serious question is about the ideas of creation. Ideas of creation that you find in the Vedas, in Nasadiya Suktam. We have talks in Nasadiya Suktam and Purusha Sukta in English. You

may listen to them. What about Nasadiya Suktam? What about Purusha Suktam? What about the various ideas of creation that the Upanishads have? Then in Taittiriya Upanishad they talk about five sheaths. Five coverings Annamaya Kosha, Pranamaya Kosha, Manomaya Kosha, Vijnanmaya Kosha, Anandamaya Kosha etc. what about them? Do you want to say they are all false? So the objections are now raised from the standpoint of common understanding and from the standpoint of scriptures. Mandukya replies. So once we get into it, it is pretty simple. Just remember there are three objections.

Firstly ,what about rebirth? What about different kinds of bodies that we have? What about Gods and Goddesses in the Vedas?

Secondly, what about Sadhana prescribed in the Upanishads? And most importantly what about theories of creation? God created this, God created the universe this way.

We just mentioned one very important thing. It was, till you have the sense of duality, till you have the sense that you eat, you dress, you work, that means you are in the realm of duality. Till you are in duality, all the prescriptions and injunctions of this world will be applicable to you. However Advaita will keep showing the light like a lighthouse, It will keep on telling you to slowly come out of it. How do you come out of it? With the help of Sadhna which belongs to the world of duality, which belongs to the world of mind. In the last stage you cross. And then you realise that the idea of bondage, the idea of freedom, these were false. Even these belong to maya.

Now if you want to understand Advaita, in relation to Dvaita, if you want to understand pure consciousness in relation to limited consciousness, the best example that I can tell you, is one that I worked out myself. And I found it really useful because it helped me explain, because it is so difficult to make these ideas go across. Think of the screen that you are watching me on. You can see me fully. Whatever may be the screen, computer or phone. You may see me talking. Now take a both side open tube and on one side is a pinhole, which may grow bigger with time. Now look at the screen through that pinhole. You can see me partly on the screen. If you move the tube left to right and right to left. All the while you see the picture partially. You should not be going back or to the front. You see only a bit of the picture every time. It acts as something like a blinker that is put on a horse's eyes. Our mind is like that tube or blinker. Our minds are like that blinker. It sees only a very small part of the whole picture. And one does not even realise it. Now as you move that blinker tune, inch by inch, time passes. You move inch by inch and time passes second by second, Now with time. As the time passes, you are move and you get a larger picture because the mind may comprehend or the hole may get bigger

The mind is like that blinker, stopper. Usual word in blinkers. Mind, your mind, my mind, his mind, her mind all are like a blinker because real understanding comes from consciousness only. Mind does not see. Mind is the stopper, It stops. You don't even realise it. The mind is

like a blinker. Like a small hole. What you are seeing is a very small part of the larger picture. As the time passes you may see a larger picture and the hole may get bigger. Great scientists,great poets have a larger hole to see. For example we had Rabindranath Tagor, such a great poet, the hole of the blinker was larger. Sages have even bigger holes to see. But for the rishis of the Vedas, sages like Sri Ramakrishna, had their blinkers removed. They saw the whole thing. When you are examined by an ophthalmologist with an ophthalmoscope, you can only see a narrow beam of light. And then suddenly as the doctor takes it away you see the whole thing. This is the relationship between Dvaita and Advaita. If a heavy sphere falls and pierces through a paper, it makes a round hole. Holes size is according to the size diameter of the sphere. Imagine a person who lives in a two dimension body in that paper. To him a larger object makes a larger hole and a smaller object makes a smaller hole. He just cannot imagine a sphere. His mind just cannot conceive the 3rd dimension! His mind is made that way. That is exactly our problem. Our blinders are such that we can see very little and we don't even realise it.

I have faith in my masters and my masters have faith in Swami Vivekananda, Swami Vivekananda had faith in Sri Ramakrishna and Sri Ramakrishna boldly asserted that is the truth. I don't find any reason why I should believe in the words of Karl Marx and in the worlds of Darwin, words of Einstein and not believe in Sri Ramakrishna. So well, what we are studying is Shruti Pramana. We believe in these masters and we believe strictly in what they are. This is the duality, non-duality, infinite consciousness appearing as finite mind.

So now Mandukya itself raises objections.

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मरणे संभवे चैव गत्यागमनयोरपि।

स्थितौ सर्वशरीरेषु आकाशेनविलक्षणः ॥ Karika 9॥

Atman, in regard to its birth, death, going and coming (i.e transmigration) and its existing in different bodies is not dissimilar to Akasa (i.e., the Ghatakasa or the ether portioned off by a jar)

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The previous verse had said **यथा भवति बालानां गगनं मलिनं मलैः** people of limited intellect, kids they think that this sky is dirty. Or the sky is curved. Space is curved. But actually is not that. It continues with the idea. So this verse no 9 says that Atman in regard to its birth and death, going and coming and dwelling in different bodies is not unlike Akasa. The way we think that Akasa is limited , the way we think that the sky is dirty, sky is cloudy, sky is sunny just like that we think of coming and going of Atman. Does the body die? The body never dies. The body disintegrates. Quite often we make this mistake. Particularly in Bengali we

say শরীর চলে গেছে। শরীর কোথায় যাবে? (Body has gone. Where will the body go?), (In Hindi we sometimes say उनका शरीर शांत हो गिया.. Body was active, it has become calm. Actually what happens is the power that was integrating material outside it into a specified structure, that power is gone. With integrating power gone, the decaying power takes over and the body disintegrates. Body disintegrates and Atman goes nowhere. So why do we say there is birth? Because there is something in between? What is there in between? It is the Sukshma Sharira, the subtle body, which is associated with every living being. I have a subtle body, you have a subtle body, everyone has a subtle body. Anyone who is alive has a subtle body. The subtle body comprises the mind, connected with me and certain other factors and it keeps on moving. Now that is very interesting. Atman remains the same and based on the consciousness of that Atman there is a force, the best way to understand this is the example of typhoons that you see in open fields during summer. It forms a funnel of whirling air and moves on the surface, sucking dust, leaves and all loose objects lying on the surface. And as it moves it drops certain things and sucks certain more things and then it dies out. (well typhoons can be highly destructive if large). While the surface of the earth is not moving, the typhoon moves, sucking in things. And that whirlwind has no ultimate existence the way earth has an independent existence. And yet it moves and keeps on sucking and throwing out certain things.

The Subtle body is exactly like that. What moves is the subtle body and yet the subtle body does not have a real existence the way say this world has or this body has. This body has more real existence than this subtle body. Because think of Sri Ramakrishna's body. All the molecules that were used by Sri Ramarishna's body, they continued to be here. Sri Ramakrishna The Atman, It continues to be the way he was. But his mind which was connecting Atman with this physical world is gone forever. These things if you think a bit, the idea will become clear. So this is what this verse says. This Atman regarding its birth and death is going and coming, that is death and rebirth. It is dwelling in different bodies. It keeps on creating different bodies like the movement of the whirlwind. It is just like Akasa. Akasa remains untouched. It remains absolutely pure although ordinary minds think the other way. Remember what we are discussing here is something very high. It is not meant for ordinary minds. So what about the bodies? Fine, we understand. But what about the Gods? What about the superior God like Indra who is the king of the Gods?

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संघांताः स्वप्नवत्सर्वे आत्ममायाविसर्जिताः।

आधिक्ये सर्वसाम्ये वा नोपपत्तिर्हि विद्यते ॥ Karika 10॥

All aggregates (such as body etc.) are produced by the illusion of the Atman (i.e., the perceiver) as in a dream. No rational arguments can be adduced to establish their reality, whether they be equal or superior.

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All aggregates, whatever kind of aggregate, the body is an aggregate are produced by Atman's Maya. Atman in its power of Maya creates it as in a dream. Dream also creates bodies, just like that Atman creates. No rational argument can be given to establish the reality. Actually there is absolutely no argument to prove that ideas like birth, rebirth are really true. So is there rebirth? Yes. if you believe in birth there is rebirth. if you don't believe in birth, there is no rebirth. What we are discussing here is extremely high. Only when you know that there is no difference between you and the food that you take, then you are really competent enough to discuss all these. So right now we are studying because these are our scriptures and knowledge. It is not that everything needs to be practiced. When you are in class six or seven, you learn something about the Moon. That does not mean that you went to the Moon. It is not that. Simply because you are studying Madukya Karika that doesn't mean that you have to practice Advaita.

So no rational argument can be given to establish the reality, whether they are of equal status or whether some are superior to others. Whatever kind of bodies, my body, your body, they have the same status. But our bodies and the bodies of the Gods are different. Gods are superior. But there is no argument to prove that any such aggregate has not been produced in reality.

When we discuss things we also have, every discussion does not mean that you will have to prove your point. Those of you who have studied mathematics a bit, you know that there is a very important theory in mathematics known as the theory of negation. When you need to prove something you don't have to prove it directly. You just prove that the opposite of it is not possible. When I first read about it, I was fascinated by this wonderful argument. This is used only in Mathematics. Suppose they say that Ax B=C under some conditions. Prove that this is correct. Suppose this cannot be proved. Then what you do is you prove that its opposite is not possible. So it is proved. When you say that these bodies are there, you don't have to prove whether Advaita is true or not. You just have to say that you tell me how these things are real. Actually there is no argument. So you will have to come back to scriptures. See again this argument is very interesting. Gaudapada wrote this Mandukya Karika, surely he didn't have any idea about Christianity or Islam. Else he would have incorporated them too. But when you are arguing somebody somebody comes to attack you, and you say what is your argument, he says what is your argument for this. And I say what is your argument not for this. Suppose somebody says that can you prove that God exists? I can also tell you, can you prove that God does not exist? That God does not exist also requires proof. Now with this kind of clash.neither can prove their point. In that case we have to fall back on

words of scriptures. This exactly is the problem where different religions cannot come to a harmony.

Of all the religious systems only Advaita has something concrete to offer. Other systems go by complete belief. Advaita does not go by belief. Advaita is the only religious system, spiritual system, that goes logically up to a point. After a point you will have to have intuitive knowledge. Without the intuitive knowledge you cannot understand Advaita. That is why those who try to understand Advaita, fail to understand. Other religious systems would say, this is what our religious book says, hence this is correct. There is no argument.

Here in the Mandukya Karika, the discussion is between different sects of Hindu religion. Now that there are differences of opinions, they will fall back to scriptures, because they both accept scriptures. All these sects believe in Vedas, and all fall back to Vedas to prove.

As far as other religions are concerned, well they all belong to the same sect as all the logic of the both the parties are our book is final. So there is no way of resolving it, except for guns, swords and abuses. That is the problem, You will find that most of the arguments that are forwarded by the so called liberal, cannot answer if you question them. Their only recourse is to fall back on abuse. Essentially there is no difference between a gun and abuse. In both these systems you are trying to annihilate your opposition.

Now we move to verse 11.

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रसादयो हि ये कोशा व्याख्यातास्तैत्तिरीयके।।

तेषामात्मा परो जीवः खं यथा सम्प्रकाशितः ॥ Karika 11 II

The supreme JIva (i.e.non-dual Brahman) is the self of the (five) sheaths, such as physical etc., which have been explained in Taittiriyaka Upanishad. That the Supreme Jiva is like Akasa has already been described by us (in the third verse of Advaita Prakarana).

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In Taittiriya Upanishad they discuss that Supreme self, which is the self of the five sheaths. They say that the Supreme self, Atman , has five coverings. The innermost is the Anandamaya Kosha, over that is the Vijnanmaya Kosha, over that is Mana (Mind) Manomaya Koasha , after that the Prana, Pranamaya Kosha the forces that work within us and finally Annamaya Kosha, that which makes this body. So such is the physical and the Vital, which has been described in the Upanishad. The supreme self is like Akasa, which has already been stated. Mandukya counters it and says, all these coverings that you are discussing, we have already mentioned that. There are different pots, and the space within each pot is limited. That does not limit the original Akasa. So you can have any number of sheaths, you can have any number of bodies, that is not going to affect Atman in any way.

We have discussed in detail the concept of Akasa, the space. Space is of three kinds as we have mentioned. The space the ether that has become the bottle and the space inside the bottle, and the space outside. Apparently there are three. In reality there is only space.

Crush this bottle and that one alone remains. This transformation is not real. It is apparent. So what Taittiriya Upanishad was discussing, that was not something real. But why is it being discussed? It will be answered a little later. Then there is in Brihadaranyaka Upanishad, and a very famous upanishad there is one Madhu Vidya and it is mentioned in the second chapter, the fifth mantra.

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द्वयोर्दयोर्मधुज्ञाने परं ब्रह्म प्रकाशितम्।

पृथिव्यामुदरे चैव यथाऽऽकाशः प्रकाशितः ॥ Karika 12॥

The description by pairs, as that of Akasa which is in the earth as also in the stomach (though referred separately), applies equally to the Supreme Brahman described in the Madhu-Brahmana (a chapter of Brihadaranyaka Upanishad), as being both in the corporeal (Adhyatma) and in the celestial (Adhidaiva) regions

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There is discussion on the sameness of the individual and the cosmic. There is Udar - the stomach and there is this cosmic world. And there it is discussed how both these are the same. There is no difference between. So the same Akasa dwells within both the earth and the stomach. Likewise the same Brahman dwells within the pair described in the Madhu Brahman. In Madhu Vidya in the famous Brihadaranyaka Upanishad they talk about Adhideva and Adyatma. These are technical terms and we need not go into it. This is actually meant for the scholars that those persons who are into technicalities. The main thing is the sameness between the individual and the cosmic. So, when you think of the same Akasa and the same space, between two pots, just like that the space within your stomach and space within this earth are one and the same. So when Madhu Vaidya discusses these two there also the idea is the same. It is the same Brahman, the way it is the same space, which is within say Stomach and this universe. Just like that, it is the same Brahman everywhere. This is what it says. Because throughout the Upanishads, for example in Brihadaranyaka upanishad itself and Kathopanishad, multiplicity has been condemned repeatedly. The method of argument is simple. They say that ok, at some places they are talking about two and sometimes they are talking about lack of multiplicity. Which one is correct? You have to justify that. You have to explain why at times, Upanishads are talking about multiplicity and at other times they are talking about absence of multiplicity. The answer will be because the maturity of our minds are different.

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जीवात्मानोरनन्यण्यत्वमभेदेन प्रशस्यते।

नानात्वं निन्द्यते यच्च तदेवं हि समनन्जसम् ॥ Karika 13॥

As the identity of Jiva and Atman, through their non-dual character, is praised and multiplicity is condemned (in the scripture) , therefore, that (non-duality) alone is rational and correct.

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Here it discusses the identity of the Jiva and Atman. Jiva is that which is identified with the individual mind and the body . The identity of Jiva and Atman is praised by pointing out their non-duality. Multiplicity is condemned. Therefore non-dualism alone is free from error. There are many statements in Upanishad, for example मृत्योः स मृत्युमाप्नोति य इह नानेव पश्यति (mṛtyoḥ sa mṛtyumāpnoti ya iha nāneva paśyati) , Brihadaranyaka Upanishad says and idaṁ sarvaṁ yat (ईदम सर्वं यत), I am Atman, whatever is is Atman.Mandukya says that, Upanishads are full of statements, that condemn multiplicity. So whatever example you are bringing from here and there are about multiplicity, is wrong. So why did Upanishads discuss multiplicity? This is something very interesting. Verse no 14, which is actually pretty simple, then you will understand why a Taittiriya Upanishad discusses reality as five sheaths, and in Madhu Vidya there are two realities.

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जीवात्मनोः पृथकत्वं यत् प्रगुत्पत्तेः प्रकीर्तितम्।
भविष्यद्वृत्या गौणं न्मुख्यत्वं हि न युज्यते ॥ 14॥

The separateness of Jiva and Atman which has been declared in (the ritual portion of the) Upanishad, dealing with the origin (of the universe), is only figurative, because this portion (of the Vedas) describe only what is to be. This statement regarding separateness can never have any meaning as truth.

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The separateness of the Jiva and Atman has been discussed many times in the Vedas and in the Upanishads, in Gita and many places. Many times in the Upanishad, we come across the separateness of Jiva and Atman. We do come across and Mandukya is not negating them. It is discussed in Upanishads while dealing with the creation. ” Bhavishyadvritti”, for which the nearest English translation is “figurative”. Because this section states only what will happen in the future, this separateness cannot be the real meaning of these passages. Here comes the final argument. Says the Upanishads have been discussing separateness and the Upamishads have been talking about oneness. Which one is correct? Gaudapada says, you have to look at these two stages, multiplicity and oneness through Bhavishyadvritti. This is the kind of expression that these sages had. Bhavishyadvriiti means futuristic comment. What is a futuristic comment? Acharya Shankar explains beautifully, says in english it won’t make sense. But in Indian languages it makes sense. That too people who are from Punjab they will not understand but people from Bengal Bihar UP partly will understand. Says odanam Pachhati. Odanam -many people in india call Bhat in bengal bihar. But many others call it Chawal. In english they say rice. So says Odonam Pacchati Odon means cooked rice, Odonam is being cooked means cooked rice is being cooked. This is similar to baking bread. Actually it is the baking of the dough, and the final product is bread. Yet we say baking bread. These expressions are speaking about future products.

This is known as Bhavishtadvritti. So Mandukya says **भविष्यद्वृत्या गौणं** - Bhavisyadvriiti is not important

So initially when they were talking about creation, they were talking about multiplicity, and all these discussions are leading towards the oneness. This is how students are given the first lessons of Upanishads. Telling the high thoughts will not be understood by the beginner, the learners of religion and spirituality. This is true for any subject. Start with the easy parts and then proceed to the complicated part. When one starts learning physics, they would start from units, to Archimedes principle to Newton's laws. He will not start with relativity and quantum physics. They come later and slowly. Exactly like that the Upanishads are slowly leading the learners towards that unification. Wherever there is mention of multiplicity, it is not as truth, it is not as reality, but it is leading a learner towards unification. So all these statements are actually taking you towards that oneness. This comes in verse no 15.

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मृल्लोहविस्फुलिङ्गाद्यै सृष्टिर्या चोदिताऽन्यथा।
उपायः सोऽवतराय नास्ति भेदः कथञ्चन॥ Karika 15॥

(The scriptural statements regarding) creation as illustrated by examples of earth.iron, sparks etc., or otherwise, (only) serve the purpose of (ultimately) explaining the unity (of Jiva and Brahman) , (Really speaking) multiplicity does not exist in any manner

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The idea is continued, so this scriptural statement regarding the creation using the examples of earth, iron and sparks are for the purpose of clarifying the mind. Multiplicity does not really exist in any manner. Just a continuation of what we were discussing. Starting verse no 16 says why talk about this, if it is not real. It says because the minds are of different kinds. And for different mindsets we need different kinds of teachings. And from there a person has to be led to the ultimate truth.

33. Demolishing Duality

The arguments that are going to come are so exciting and interesting that I named it Demolishing Duality. Just keep this thing in mind that the HIndu race, Brahmins as a class, memorised the four Vedas and kept the Veda intact for the last ten thousand years. In the process, they were attached to the Vedas, still they maintain it.

So the purpose of the Vedas cannot be just to explain something that is obvious. If you can keep this key point in mind, the immensity of the Vaidic wisdom will be clear to you. So why are these things there? These things, the statements that talk about creation, are there to introduce the subject so that they can be taken forward in future.

Let us have a look at verse 16

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आश्रमास्त्रिविधा हीनमध्यमोत्कृष्टदृष्टयः ।

उपासनोपदिष्टेयं तदर्थमनुकम्पया ॥ Karika 16॥

There are three stages of life corresponding to three - the lower, the middle and the high – powers of comprehension. The scripture, out of compassion, has taught this devotion (or discipline) for the benefit of those (who are not yet enlightened).

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Why are we having all these different theories of creation and from there leading on towards non-duality? It says there are three stages of life corresponding to the three fold understanding. The three fold understanding is inferior, mediocre and superior. This is how spiritual intelligence and understanding of people can be classified.

When Swami Vivekananda had returned from the west and he was talking, very famously he had said in Chennai to the professors, " when it comes to spirituality, you all are moustached babies." You have grown moustaches but you are like babies. You have no understanding. And based on these three categories as explained above, India i,e., Hinduism came up with the famous Varnashrama Dharma. Very often nowadays the caste system is ridiculed, criticised and lots of things happen, but the idea was that depending on what kind of intellect you have, what kind of spiritual understanding (By intellect we don't mean the worldly intellect. We mean spiritual intellect) a person could have his Varna, from the four Varnas - Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra.

Actually Acharya Shankar has mentioned that Varnashram Dharma is meant only for those people who want to grow spiritually. If you don't accept the Vedas, If you don't accept the spiritual truths, if you don't want spiritual life, spiritual enlightenment, then Varnashram Dharma is not meant for you.

Brahmacharya, Garhyasthya, Vanaprastha and Sannyas - are the four stages of life of a Hindu. As you grow old you move more and more towards Sannyas. You need to give up and if you don't you will suffer. As your worldly understanding, your worldly wisdom has matured by then, you know that there is nothing to gain from this world. What the Hindu outlook says is that depending on what kind of spiritual understanding you have developed, you will be born in one of these four Varnas. Varnas and Caste, these are two different things. We have explained this many times. So we need not go into details here. Because Varnashram Dharma is not diecast, it is not hidebound and there is definitely no guarantee that a spiritually advanced person will not be born in a low caste, maybe because of some poor karma. The thing is that when you have to run the society, you have to make some framework, what framework you make, there will be some disappointments, there will be some complaints. If you make laws in favour of females, some male members will suffer. If you are truly gender neutral then again some females will suffer. So this problem will always

be there. In India, I find it so funny that there are so many laws, and whatever you do, if you write anything on your social media post, you could be arrested for Intent of hurting the sentiment of others. See once in a particular state there was some kind of mourning going on. And there were some kind of roadblocks and someone wrote why this road block. And some kid just clicked like. The kid was arrested! Laws are like that! Whatever law you make, there will always be some kind of opposition to that.

Hindus lived by this. The idea was, we have different kinds of spiritual understanding and that is why we are superior, mediocre and inferior.

People with low understanding take this world as real and God as unreal. So all these communists and liberals belong to this lower intellect level. If you consider the world to be real and God also to be real and the world coming from God, you have mediocre talent. If you believe that God alone exists, then you have superior intellect. This is the very clear standpoint of Advaita.

This verse 16 says, all these scriptures that you go through, (by Scripture we mean the four Vedas and Upanishads with them) are meant for people with inferior intellect and people with mediocre intellect. People with superior intellect don't need these scriptures. Because the moment you tell the superior intellect people that Atman alone exists, they will understand in one go.

When I was studying Mandukya Karika way back in 1985/86, I asked my teacher, is it possible that someone will instantly realise that Atman alone exists? My teacher immediately said, Sri Ramakrishna taught this to Swami Vivekananda, he instantly understood. If you have superior spiritual understanding, superior spiritual intellect, you will realise that God alone exists. Guru says Tatvamasi, you are that. The disciple says Aham Brahmasmi - I am Brahma. He realises that even if you have just the theoretical understanding you are of superior intellect.

What Karika says next is explosive. The real purpose of rituals, social structures, mythologies is to take people of inferior and mediocre talents to the upper level. For example we are having Mahavarata talks in Bengali and people are listening, and many are telling that they never imagined Mahabharat to be like this. I said obviously that is the speciality of Mahabharat. Mahabharat runs clearly in three levels. Even a kid can enjoy the stories of Mahabharat. The adults see the similarity between the characters and incidents in Mahabharat with their own life and get life lessons. And people with spiritual maturity see Mahabharat as the treasure house of spirituality. So you need mythologies, you need stories, you need rituals. They regulate the lives of the ordinary intellects. By ordinary intellect I mean ordinary spiritual intellects. You may be extremely intelligent and might be an Einstein, but when it comes to spirituality it is a completely different thing. Swamiji when he returned from the west, while speaking, many a times he has said even an ordinary illiterate

Hindu living in a village has more understanding of spirituality that the most learned professors in Europe and America. Alas! Today Indians go to America to learn philosophy! Can there be a bigger stupidity! If you want to know about spirituality, come live in India, put on the garbs of this land on your body, take deep in Holy Ganga maybe for a year, purify yourself, then slowly you might be able to get a glimpse of what these scriptures want to say. Not just understanding it. And these are not my words, these are not my understanding. First I heard of these things, first I read of these things from Swami Vivekananda, and it is a fact. When it comes to guns etc, the west may be great, when it comes to spirituality It is we who know it. Verse no 17 and 18 are very interesting. Not very important but very interesting, where Advaita demolished duality thoroughly.

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स्वसिद्धान्तव्यवस्थासु दैति नो निश्चिता दृढ़म्।
परस्परं विरुध्यन्ते तैरयंं न विरुध्यते ॥ Karika 17॥

The dualists obstinately cling to the conclusions arrived at by their own enquiries (as being the truth). So they contradict one another ; whereas the Advaitin finds no conflict with them.

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The dualists obstinately cling to the conclusions arrived at by their own understanding and enquiries and so they contradict one another. Whereas Advaitins find no conflict with them. Other than Advaitins, everyone is a dualist. Every religion is dualistic. Every philosophical system is dualistic. They reach their conclusion by whatever means, for example God has told them something. They might be believing that God has said something, it could be the product of their own mind, it might be the product of their own logical fallacies, logical inconsistencies. Just to give you an example, it has happened in the past that many philosophers wanted to come up with a system of philosophy that will completely eliminate any possibility of error. So Bertrand Russell came with his own mathematical philosophy and wanted to prove that well this is how logic should go. And during his own lifetime there was famous mathematician Kurt Gödel who proved mathematically that this cannot be done. While staying in a system you cannot prove that it is consistent. So while staying within the limits of mathematical logic you cannot prove that it is consistent. So whether it be their logical consistency or logical inconsistencies, they believe that they are correct. Advaita has no quarrel with them. Absolutely none. The reason will be discussed later. Now I will give you one quotation from Swamiji, where he very beautifully said that , “Vedanta, is the whole of religions. The Vedanta applied to the various ethnic customs and creeds of Hinduism of India is Hinduism”. So when you apply Vedanta to Indian customs etc, it becomes Hinduism. The first stage, that is Dvaita, applied to ideas of ethnic groups of Europe is Christianity. Christianity is hopelessly dualistic. Vedanta as applied to the semitic groups is Mohammedanism. Though they talk of formless God, their religious philosophy is dualistic. God is real, the world is real. The Advaita as applied in its Yog perceptions form is

Buddhism, Yog is a very important aspect of Advaita, though a very small segment. Buddhists won't even understand it.

Now by religion it means Vedanta. Applications vary according to different needs. Now as far as Advaita is concerned, actually Vedanta means Advaita. When we are talking about Dvaita and Vishishtadvaita, it is all Bhabishyadristi. It is leading you forward, nothing more than that, as we shall see. How? Advaita alone gives you the rationale of relative truths by giving utility. For example if you ask a Christian, why do you go to church only on Sundays, and why do you go to a church at all? They have no rational, They will say God has ordered. Now what is the proof that God has ordered or ordained? Or they will say our prophet has said this. If you don't believe in it we will shoot you dead. Not only shoot you dead , we will torture you to death. Then my God will put you through the hellfire and will put you eternally in the hell. Still they will not say what their rationale is. But Advaita instantly explains. Advaita says all these rituals and myths and social conducts are extremely necessary to purify the mind. So it doesn't need to be God ordained. Going to the church,it need not be God ordained. Then why is it said to be God ordained? Because people fear God and people can understand only that language and this ensures compliance.

In one company, group insurance had to be done. One gentleman was not signing and people tried to make him understand. He was not willing to sign and would only say that he doesn't understand. So finally the boss called him and told him either to sign it or lose the job. He instantly signed it. The boss asked why were you not signing till now? Said because no one told me in such clear terms. People need to be told in this kind of language. Either you do it or you go to hell. And they are scared. And with logic people have brought hell to this earth. You believe in what we say or else we will send it to hell. And if I die in the process, the gates of heaven will be opened for me. So rational is not provided by the dualists themselves. It is a shocking thing! Believe me, if you go to a Vaishnava, you will find them to be the worst kind of fanatics that Indian philosophical systems have ever seen. They just don't have any rationale. Rather we Advaitins supply them with rationale. Not only that, Advaita emphasizes on the importance of religious disciplines and social systems. That includes every social system. The social practices of Europe and social practices in America may differ from social practices of India. But Advaita will never have an objection to that. Because we understand that these things are extremely necessary for the evolution of the spirit. For the growth of a person. For the growth of mind, it is extremely important.

Do we need Mahabharata? Do we need all these tales which sound so big? Indeed we need as Advaita says. Do we need all these bell ringing and conch shells blowing? Advaita says yes we need to. Can the dualists explain it? No they themselves cannot. You go and ask any priest, why do you do it? He says well my father used to do, or my teacher has said so. They don't have any rational explanation. Advaita is rational, that is why It can explain.

When I wrote the book “The world of Religions”, one muslim professor went through the entire script and he was amazed. He wrote the foreword. There he very clearly wrote this is the difference between a man from the world of religion and the person from outside the religion. When somebody is writing from outside, his understanding will be different. One who is living that religion, his perception will be different. Advaita understands. This is what Mandukya Karika is saying that we understand why these things are done.

You ask your Christian friends, why do they go to church? The answer would be either my forefathers used to go or the Bible says so or both. But what is the rationale behind this? People talk about scientific religion. Only Advaita can give the scientific basis, reasonable rationale based religion. You may not accept that. Because In every argument there should be clear premises and parameters, the boundary condition. Once the premises are agreed upon debate will never cross challenge them from either side. Once these are set, you will understand that Advaita is the only scientific and logical system of thought.It is not just religion, it is not just philosophy, It is truth. The whole thing takes you to the ultimate reality.

Buddha had this problem. All these Indian philosophies and other religions are actually total dualist. Even Samkhya is dualist. Yog is dualist. Vaisheshika and Naya are dualists. Purba Mimamsha is dualist. Shaiva, Parshwa they are all dualist. And they continuously quarrel with each other. Because they think only they are right.

When Buddha came with his transcendental reality, whatever that might mean, he demolished social systems, demolished rituals, criticised rituals, and did not accept the Vedas - So what happened? India got rid of Buddhists itself. Because howsoever exalted the teachings of Buddha might sound to his followers, fundamental structure is flawed. And Buddha criticised the then practices of Hindu religion and Buddhists came up with their own practices. But if you go to any Buddhist shrine, see the amount of rituals they have and see the myths they have built around Buddha. Basically what you did? You demolished a system, you said that no rituals needed, you said that no myths needed. And you created myths, everything around yourself.

What is idol worship? Idol worship is when you confine your understanding to a particular thing, saying this is God. But Hindus actually do not do that. It is basically to remind you of the supreme reality. When you go to a temple, say Belur Math temple, when we look at the Vigraha of Sri Ramakrishna, it reminds us of Sri Ramakrishna. But the same thing is done by other religions too. Even muslims go to Kaba. You may go on justifying this and that. But it is all the same.

What Advaita says is that, different schools of Dvaita are just like limbs of a great body. For example, I am a human being. So I have two hands, I have feet, I have teeth, tongue. In the process of my daily life my hand may touch my body. That does not mean that my hand will

be punished. I know that these are all limbs of the same body. If a mom has four kids, they quarrel, but for a mom they are all the same. They are all her kids.

Every school of Dvaita is accepted by Advaita. This is the greatness of Shankaracharya. During my Brahmachari days at the Ramakrishna Mission (the first ten years in white cloth), I used to find Shankaracharya's works very confusing. Whenever there is a description of creation, say in our Gita, Acharya Shankar supports that whole heartedly. When Gita is talking about hell or heaven., Shankaracharya supports it fully. This confused me. Later I realised that Acharya Shankar has no objection to any of the theories. He has no fight with Pashupat, no fight with Samkhya or Yog. He would have also had no objection to Islam or Christianity, had he known about them, their existence. He was from Kerala, yet surprisingly it seems that he did not know about Christians. Christians had come to Kerala by then. When Sri Ramakrishna came, it was the same philosophy. He accepted all religions to be true. Sri Ramakrishna says Advaita is the last word. "Advita sesh katha". Till that last word, till you reach the peak of Mount Everest, all the paths leading to the top of mount Everest, are all equally valid. But Mount Everest is Mount Everest. Similarly Advaita is Advaita. Advaita says that well, you are also my own limb. You are not different from me. Because if I treat you as something different, in that case you will become real. If you become real, then I have to fight with you. If I fight with you, then you are real, and I have no fight with you. I know you are perfectly alright, nothing wrong with it. Because ultimately all these paths belong to the mind and mind itself is unreal. Acharya Shankar adds in verse no 17 that every dualistic path, be that a philosophy, be that a religion, is just a system of thinking, coloured by love and hatred. Love of the ilk and hatred for those who do not belong to the sect. Look at these religions. Look at the Christian world. It is easy for me to use the word Christian. I cannot use other names for obvious reasons. Christians love each other, they consider themselves civilised. There cannot be anything more ridiculous than this. They feel anyone outside the Christian world needs to be taught a lesson. So their view is coloured, poisoned by the love for their own ilk, extreme dislike , hatred for others. Can you really call it a system? A system that is coloured so deeply. It is soaked in syrup of love and hatred. Love for their own. Hatred for the others.

Advaita has absolutely no issues like that. Everybody is my own, even those who oppose me are my own. That is the beauty of Advaita. It is very unfortunate that Acharya Shankar lived for such a short period and could not preach the practical applications of Advaita. Swami Vivekananda did it. If you go through his works you will see that what Swami Vivekananda preaches is the practical aspects of Advaita Vedanta - universal brotherhood, synthesis of religions, harmony of religions. All these all come only when you accept Advaita. No other religion does so.

Do you think a muslim would accept that Hindus are the same as them? For them Hindus are Kafirs. For Christians, Hindus are infidels. If you belong to the religion of the book, you are treated in one way. If you are not, you are Jahil (ignorant). How can you have harmony of religions? Because even if some progressive mind says that we are willing to accept as equal, their very sacred books, the fountainhead of the religion will not allow them to accept. So one or two might be good people in every religion, be it Judaism, Christianiy, but they don't matter.

Once a scholar was talking about how those who do not belong to their faith are to be killed. There were red faces and the speaker said, Gentlemen, I am quoting from the Bible,the Old Testament. Your religion is totally steeped in hatred. And love of your own. Raag Dwesh - attachment for your own people and hatred for others. Can you really call this a system of Philosophy? Can you call it the religion of peace? Can you even call it a religion?

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अद्वैतं परमार्थो हि द्वैतं तद्भेद उच्यते।

तेषामुभयथा द्वैतं तेनयं न विरुध्यते ॥ Karika 18॥

As non-duality is the ultimate Reality, therefore duality is said to be its effect (Karya or Bheda). The dualists perceive duality either way (i.e., both in the Absolute and in the phenomena). Therefore the non-dual position does not conflict with the dualist's position.

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Duality is the effect of non-dual unity. Duality is just an aspect. Every religious faith that we can think of, every philosophical system that you can think of, is just an effect of non-duality. Because from an ordinary standpoint, cause and effect they are different. Because if cause and effect are non-different there will be total confusion. For example raw rice and boiled rice. Actually they are the same. Cause and effect are the same. But from day to day ordinary understanding is different. But as you go higher you realise that they are all the same. Water and Ice are both H2O. But as far as our day to day life is concerned these are different. Where does this difference come from? We are coming back to that same old issue. It is the mind. Every difference that we see, cause and effect that we see, different systems of philosophy that we see, different religions that we see, is born of mind. These are not the ultimate real. Those with inferior intellect see this world as real. Why? Because that is how their mind is trained. People with a mediocre intellect see that the world is real and God as real. Because that is how their intellect is. It is the mind that created duality. And that is why in the state of deep sleep, or some kind of unconsciousness etc.,or in Samadhi duality vanishes. But the knowledge of non-duality does not come. That is a different thing. Knowledge of non-duality comes only during Nirvikalpa Samadhi. After that even when you come back you see that duality is just a play of name and form. But when you go into deep sleep you forget everything because the mind is not functioning the way it should function. Duality vanishes, Why should duality vanish? When you know these, dualists come up with

objections. They asked if non-duality comes only during samadhi, why does duality return when one is back from samadhi? That means duality persists, Why? Now that is no argument at all.

Once you go into samadhi, for example Sri Ramakrishna when he went into Samadhi, he saw non-duality. When he came back, non-duality was the truth. This is because he had gone into Nirvikalpa Samadhi. But since he was moving around with people who would understand non-duality, he had to keep his mind in the state of duality. But he knew all along, that non-duality is the truth. He says, tie this knowledge of non-duality in the hem of your duality and do all the work. You perform all the work that is related to the dualistic world, but know that non-duality to be the reality. Thus Advaita never has any objection to Dvaita. Dvaita is perfectly alright. But if you say that duality is real then we have objection. In this relative world, the world that is created by the mind, duality is a truth. But duality is not real. Having said that, Advaita has no quarrel and Acharya Shankar uses really beautiful examples. He said one gentleman was moving on his elephant, which was common practice among well to do people those days. This elephant is spirited. Full of spirit moving down the road. There came a drunkard. Acharya Shankar uses the word Unmattam-Jathamatta Gajarurha , unmattam bhumishtham , so there is a gentleman on the elephant full of power, and there is a lunatic, drunk standing on the road. He challenges this man to come, I am also on an elephant. Let the two elephants have a fight. What will this elephant rider do? He will just smile at him and move on.

Acharya Shankar compares every system based on duality, every philosophy based on duality as “Unmatta’ people. Those whose minds have gone wrong, standing on the way and challenging one sitting on an elephant and asking him to come and fight with him because he thinks he is also on an elephant!

As far as you and I are concerned, It is up to our minds to accept or not accept. Because Mandukya is explaining things from the standpoint of scriptures, logically and through various examples that Advaita is the ultimate reality. Gaudapada will show next how non-duality is the truth.

34. Mukti and Duality

We saw how Advaita was demolishing dualism. On the one hand it says that it has no quarrel with the dualists whereas on the other hand dualists fight between each other. Like many of you. Earlier I believed that Dvaita, Vishista Advaita and Advaita are watertight

compartments. But as I grew and studied Gita, and particularly while reading chapter 12 and chapter 15 I had this problem. I also had a doubt that Acharya Shankar while describing Bhakti is explaining just like a dualist, a Dvaitavadi. And whenever he is talking about qualified non-dualism, Vishista Advaita, he is talking like that. I asked a very senior monk the secret behind it. I will never forget that moment, which gave me a great realisation about it. An eureka moment. He said that Advaita takes a complete picture. Dvaita and Vishishta Advaita take partial pictures. That was the moment things became clear to me.

Those who consider Dualism to be correct, it is fair enough. But from that day onwards I didn't study any of those great masters. They are great masters, no doubt about it.

The little that I read about Dvaita and Vishishta Advaita is from the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna only. I read nothing else now. I am not interested and I don't know what is the issue between philosophies.

Now Acharya Shankar is telling the same thing. Advaita takes the complete picture. It has no issues with any of these philosophies because the moment you come into the empire of mind, the realm of mind, all these theories become valid. Any of these theories, every philosophy that the world has seen from the Indian Subcontinent to any other places are all valid. Why do we have so many religions? Why do we have so many Gods? For the simple reason that there are so many minds. Nothing wrong with it. If we can understand this, a lot of confusion goes away.

Next verses, will discuss how Dvaita looks at this world and how Dvaita looks at the soul. The fundamental difference between Advaita and Dvaita , is that Dvaita considers this world as real, real means that it has an independent existence. Now whether it is dependent on God or not dependent on God, is not important. The important thing is it has a real existence the way Samkhya philosophy of Yog philosophy considers this world as real. Advaita does not accept it as real. We have discussed some of the arguments, and some arguments will continue. The discussion that follows is both simple and compound. Simple means it is in the most elementary form. If something is simple in its essence, in its true form, it cannot change its nature. Those of you who have studied philosophy even a bit, would know that Plato has described beautifully how Socrates used to teach. To think of the idea of quality, think of our olfactory glands through which we smell things. When we smell something, that object is giving out some odour so, the property that gives out smell is something fundamental as far as we understand, that property cannot change. And we know from Samkhya philosophy, we know from Yog philosophy that when creation comes these five things are the fundamentals (earth, water, fire, air, and ether). They are relatively fundamental and they cannot change their nature. When we say fire, we always think of its burning capacity. If the fire does not burn it is no more fire. However when something becomes a compound, the moment it becomes a compound of two or three of whatever, it is

now prone to changes, prone to transformation. Transformation is possible only if it is a compound. And if a thing is getting transformed, know that it is a compound. This is one of the fundamental arguments that Advaita uses.

Atman is simplest of simple and there cannot be anything more fundamental. By simple we mean fundamental. Creation means complex, creation means compound. Now, if Atman undergoes real transformation as the dualists claim, there are many kinds of transformation and every transformation ultimately leads to complete destruction. The Indian system has classified transformation into six (It's like your existence becomes apparent, you are born, you grow, you decay, you become old, and you finally disintegrate). That means if you believe that Atman has undergone transformation, then some day it will be destroyed too. But every scripture says that Atman is unborn , Atman cannot undergo any change. Atman can never be destroyed. And here the conclusion is that Atman gets destroyed. Simple because it undergoes transformation. So here the argument is based on transformation. The second very important thing we will discuss is that the goal of every scripture is Mukti, liberation and this Mukti has to be atyantik, i.e., ultimate. If this world is real, if the transformation of Atman is real, then the bondage also becomes real. If the bondage becomes real, mukti can never be permanent, because the possibility of Atman falling back in the trap remains very much there. This is the problem with every dualist system. You may go to heaven, if you follow your religion or any of these religions, but the possibility of falling down from there is very much there. It happened with Adam and Eve. Adam and Eve were living in heaven. They fell down. You can also fall down. So you cannot have the ultimate Mukti. So, Mukti, as defined in the scriptures can come only through Advaita. And bondage has to be unreal. If bondage is real there cannot be mukti. If bondage is unreal then the world has to be unreal - absolutely simple argument. When the Upanishad says you are Brahman, they are talking about ultimate freedom and ultimate Mukti. Ultimate Mukti means bondage has to be imaginary. If bondage is real, liberation cannot be real. If bondage real, then the world becomes real, and if bondage is unreal, the world becomes unreal. If the world becomes unreal, Advaita becomes the truth. Not Dvaita. This is an absolutely simple and profound argument.

With this we can proceed with the Arguments as presented in our verses. The verses that we are going to cover here will revolve around these two arguments. We move to verse no 19.

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मायया विद्यते ह्येतन्नन्यथाऽजं कथञ्चन्।
तत्त्वतो भिद्यमाने हि मर्त्यताममृतं व्रजेत् ॥ Karika 19॥

This unborn (changeless, non-dual Brahman) appears to undergo modification only on account of Maya (illusion) and not otherwise. For, if this modification were real, the immortal (Brahman) would become mortal.

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Atman is unborn. It becomes manifold through Maya. not otherwise. For if the manifold were real then the immortal will become mortal.

मायया विद्यते ह्येतन्नन्यथाऽजं कथञ्चन् - Atman is immortal - unborn -Aja . That is how scriptures have described Atman. How can God, who is immortal, create something mortal? People can emotionally say God can do this, God can do that, no question of argument is there. But if we go deeper and think, can God create something that is transitory? He can never. Atman is His nature. Even in Christian tradition he breathed spirit. It is God's breath. So how can Atman undergo transformation and ultimately to destruction? This is what verse 19 says. Atman is unborn. Atman can never be born. All these differences that we see, all the manifolds that we see are because of Maya, the divine power of God. Because if the transformation were real, then the immortal will become mortal. We must have some very basic understanding about what is God and what is Atman. These terms cannot come from general understanding. People who are talking plain philosophy, people who are talking politics, people who are talking literature, they cannot have a grasp of this subject. The moment you say Atman, the moment you say God, you have accepted spirituality as truth. If you have accepted spirituality as truth, then you need to move your arguments accordingly. Atman is unborn so it cannot be born and it cannot have transformation. All the transformations that we see have to be imagined because if the transformation were to be real then Atman the immortal will become Atman the mortal. And there will be no difference between Atman and body. That would be crazy. Every scripture says that spirit, even the Bible, is talking about body and spirit and says they are qualitatively different. Behaviour of spirit can never become the behaviour of the body. No sane mind who believes in spirituality or believes in religion will ever believe that the unborn, the immortal, the immutable, can acquire opposite properties. That is just impossible. Now we move to Karika 20.

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अजातस्यैव भावस्य जातिमिच्छन्ति वादिनः।

अजातो ह्यमृतो भावो मर्त्यतां कथमेष्यति ॥ Karika 20॥

The disputants (i.e.the dualists) contend that the ever-unborn (changeless) entity (Atman) undergoes a change. How could an entity which is changeless and immortal partake of the nature of the mortal?

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We have already discussed these ideas. The dualists assert that the unborn Atman becomes born. How is that possible? Atman has been described in the Upanishads as the unborn, Aja, that which is never born. In the age of Youtube many people are talking of Advaita Vedanta. But in the name of Advaita, most are talking wrong. And are presenting psychology and even monotheism. Because many people think Advaita as one. Advaita is

not one, not zero. It is beyond zero, beyond one. This we have discussed earlier. Advaita is not Buddhism. Buddhism accepts ultimate reality as zero. Advaita is not Abrahamic religion that accepts monotheism, one God. Advaita is beyond both. Acharya Shankar uses the expression Garrulous - Bhabadukhah - They keep on talking.

If they were to accept their premises, their theory then Atman the immortal becomes Atman the mortal. Atman the unborn becomes Atman the born.

You must be familiar with the theory of creation according to the Bible. According to the Bible God created the universe and there was spirit etc and Adam and Eve fell from the Garden of Eden. If you go deeper, you will realise that what kind of creation is this? God's creation has to be immortal. As it is coming out of God. And it has to be unborn. The problem is that we people, people like us, have so limited understanding that we see that beings are getting born everyday, in every species. So we think that creation also has come in something like that way. It is in our nature. It is in human nature to apply our limited knowledge, whatever knowledge we have on the unknown. So we apply the knowledge of the world to the empire of spirituality too. Spirituality is of course not an empire but the reality of spirituality. And so we think that this universe was created and I was created and things like that.

Acharya Shankar says that these dualists want to prove that creation is real and they want to prove that birth of an individual is real. And this is something difficult. Quite difficult to grasp but this is the truth. Gita beautifully says, *jātasya hi dhruvo mṛityur dhruvaṁ janma mṛitasya cha, tasmād aparihārye 'rthe na tvaṁ śhochitum arhasi (Chapter 2, verse 27)*. It means Death is certain for one who has been born, and rebirth is inevitable for one who has died. Therefore, you should not lament over the inevitable. So anything that is born will die. So if Atman is born, it will also die, which implies that Atman takes up the property of the body. Where is then its speciality being the spirit? It is like talking about a cold fire. How can fire be cold? There can be a cold flame but fire cannot be cold. Anything that is known by its essence has to retain its essence and the essence itself can never go. For example as Jesus says in the Bible, if salt loses saltiness etc. If salt loses its saltiness, it becomes a piece of stone, but the taste of salt , saltiness itself can never lose its essence. Sweetness will continue to be sweetness, saltiness will continue to be saltiness, these can never change their nature. It is in the nature of Atman to be unborn. Under no condition can it be born. It is impossible that the unborn, the immortal, the immutable, acquires opposite properties.

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न भवत्यमृतं मर्त्यं न मर्त्यममृतं तथा।
प्रकृतेरण्यथाभावो न कथञ्चिद्भविष्यति ॥ Karika 21II

The immortal cannot become mortal, nor can the mortal ever become immortal. For it is never possible for a thing to change its nature.

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That which is immortal can never become mortal, nor can the mortal become immortal. There is no way. For it is never possible for a thing to change its nature. Quality, that Socrates said is the essence. You say Red cloth. The piece of red cloth, you can change its colour. You can apply some other colour. And the red cloth may become green cloth. But redness can never become green. It is its essence. Life is all about going back to its essence. Life is about its search for essence, your essence. What is the essence? What is the fundamental?

Just digressing a bit. Do you know what mathematics is? It is just a tool, some kind of a bridge that shortens the vastness of knowledge. For example, think that you need to add something. Say there is a heap, which has 100 elements, 100 objects and another heap which also has say 200 elements, 200 objects of the same kind. You want to know the total, if these two heaps are mixed up. So you have to go on counting and find 300. What addition does is that it shortens the process and you reach the other end of knowledge quickly. Look at any subject, Physics. Chemistry, Psychology, go to any subject, every subject is a shortcut to knowledge. Every subject is. Be it Mathematics, be it Physics, be it Chemistry, they are all shortcuts to knowledge, or bridges to knowledge, tunnel to knowledge, use any term. What is the ultimate shortcut to knowledge? Knowing the essence. Once you have known the essence of this universe, once you have known the essence of existence, now you have mastered complete knowledge. Mathematics gives you part knowledge, Physics gives you part knowledge, Chemistry gives you part knowledge, but if you can know the entire knowledge, then you won't need any bridges. If you can fly from one point to another point, you don't need roads, you don’t need bridges. Once I had been to Leh, Ladakh, I was going by road. It took me four days to travel by road. During my return I came by fight. It took me less than one hour. I found it so funny. But this is the mystery of all knowledge. When you take one of those bridges, from Mathematics to Physics, they act like bridges to knowledge, shortcuts to knowledge. If you had known the whole thing, you wouldn't need bridges any more. That is why spiritual persons do not need science. Once you have understood that this is the essence of the thing, you don't need to go on experimenting with it. If the essence of a thing is to be immortal, you need to know that it can never change its essence and can never be mortal. Similarly a mortal thing can never become immortal. People when they fall in love and say may I get you all my births? Can you get it? No you cannot. Because you are mortal, he is mortal, she is mortal, once it is over it is over. A Mortal can never be immortal. Conversely, immortal can never be mortal. Here the discussion is on the essence, the ultimate essence and the ultimate essence is the Atman. What is Atman - immortal. Essence can never go away, under no condition essence can go away. So the contention of the dualists that the world is real, that a soul takes a birth, they are all wrong. Soul can never take birth. Soul by nature is immortal. Birth belongs to a

compound. Soul is not compound, It is simple, fundamental. These are profound truths, these arguments seem subtle. Actually they are extremely fundamental. And extremely unsettling. The idea is continuing in verse no 22.

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स्वभावेनामृतो यस्य भावो गच्छति मर्त्यताम्।
कृतकेनामृतस्तस्य कथं स्थास्यति निश्चलः ॥ Karika 22॥

How can he , who believes that the naturally immortal entity becomes mortal, maintain that the immortal , after passing through change, retains its changeless nature?

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How can one who believes that an entity which by nature is immortal becomes mortal and maintain that immortality after passing through change and retain its changeless nature? Is it possible? Those who have absolutely no background of spirituality probably will not understand these arguments. We come across such people now and then. But those who have some understanding would know that Atman has been described in the Upanishads as Aja - unborn, Amar - Immortal. You are saying that being born means undergoing transformation. Transformation means destruction. So you are forcing your immortal Atman to be mortal. The moment you accept that creation is real, birth becomes real, death becomes real. If death becomes real, then Atman becomes destructible. You are going against your own basic premises. In mathematics they prove something by negation. They make a statement , go against it and show that it is not possible. This is what Advaita is doing here. It is showing that it is not possible. If you ask the followers of Madhwacharya and Ramanuja they will also accept that Atman is immortal and they will say that Upanishad says that Atman is immortal. If Atman is immortal, perfect, the same Upamishad says Atman the soul is unborn too. Now you say that somehow it undergoes birth. If it undergoes birth then it also undergoes transformation. Which means it will have death too. Simple.

So now the question comes that Advaita is propounding the theory that there never was creation. Now what about me and what about you? Advaita never denies it. This is a major confusion that people have. Advaita never denies the importance of food, for example Advaita will never deny the importance of sleep, of activity. Advaita does not deny that creation is there. What Advaita says is that it is not real. By real we mean, it has its absolute existence. What it is, it is not real. If it is not real, something imaginary you can say. It represents a changing state and is not permanent.

Real and unreal - These two are extremely technical terms. If you can understand what is real, the definition of real is that which stays the same in the past, present and future. Vedanta uses the term Paramarthata (ultimate). Is it ultimately real?

Though we say ultimately creation is real, Advaita will say no, it is not real. This is where the entire problem comes from. The idea continues in the next verse no 23.

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भूततोऽभूतो वाऽपि सृज्यमाने समा श्रुतिः ।
निश्चितं युक्तियुक्तं च यत्तद्भवति नेतरत् ॥ Karika 23॥

Passing into birth may be real or illusory. Both these views are equally mentioned in Sruti. That which is supported by Sruti and corroborated by reason, is alone true and not the other.

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Actually these are not very complicated, maybe a little subtle. Coming into birth may be real or illusory, both views are equally supported by scriptures. But that view which is supported by the scriptures and corroborated by reason is alone to be accepted and not the other. This is again a slightly subtle verse. What verse 23 says is that we find in the scriptures that creation has been described, both as real and also as imaginary. And there are many verses in Vedas and Upanishad, where you find, God created that kind of thing. Again you have verses where it says that it is maya, it is imaginary, Now this is an amazing statement that Mandukya Karika makes. It says that you need to take only those statements from scripture that corroborate to reason. This was a very complicated problem in Christianity too. Those of you who are familiar with the philosophy of the world, particularly western philosophy, will find that Christian world has a very serious problem with this. What if there is a conflict between some statement from the Bible and reason. The Church had problems resolving this. Fortunately in India, fortunately for Hinduism, our Vedas are so vast that practically everything is there. So you need to apply your mind and see what is more reasonable. This is a great advantage and on the other hand, this is a great disadvantage. Because, one can take advantage of this and come up with wrong ideas.

So our scripture talks about creation as real. Our scripture also talks about creation as imaginary. By imaginary means, it appears, but the transformation is not real. Mandukya says that, since you have both kinds of statements, you should take the most logical step, which has reasoning behind it.

In the Gospel of Shri Ramakrishna, there is a beautiful story. There was a young boy who learned that God has become everything. He was going down the street and somebody was shouting that an elephant was coming, so run away. And this fellow thought, God has become everything, God has become this elephant too, so he sat down and started doing prayers to that God in the form of that elephant. The elephant caught him in his trunk and threw him away. Bones broken, he asked his teacher. The teacher said, God has become everything, no doubt. God has become the mahout also. Why did you choose to believe in your mind that God is only the elephant instead of the God as Mahout? That means, even when you are trying to understand the meaning of the scriptures, you need to apply your mind.

This is one thing we lack in India. We don't want to think. We don't want to apply our minds. Apply your mind and everything will become clear. Because scriptures say too many things

and these grand ideas coming from Shankaracharya, have a beauty of explaining everything. He does not leave our anything. He does not say ok fine. I will take this statement and I will not take this statement. He explains, he weaves through the entire thing. He clears that monster web or he creates that master garland, beautiful necklace. What is that? Yes, these things are needed. Why? BhavishyaDrishti. These things are leading you finally to realise that Atman never has any kind of transformation. Vedanta goes by Shruti (scriptures), Yukti (reasoning) and Anubhuti (understanding and own realisation).
So how do you understand, how do you feel about it? If you go into meditation, do you realise what it is like to be, what it has to be, and what the reasoning says? Whatever is your understanding and reasoning do these two things corroborate by scripture statement. Are they saying something like that? If yes, that is correct. In this story by Sri Ramakrishna, we find the importance of the mind. Mandukya is also saying the importance of mind. However this importance of mind is conditional. It is not absolute. The importance of mind is only till the conclusion that you reach and it has to be corroborated by scriptures. Similarly if you find 2-3 different kinds of statements, apply your mind. Apply reasoning and see where it leads too. So, Acharya Shankar in his commentary beautifully says, if you apply reason, then creation cannot exist. There cannot be anything called creation, worse, it does not serve any purpose. This is a dangerous statement coming from Acharya Shankar. Why would God create? Why?
There has to be some purpose. God is not a kid. God is not a mad man. In the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, Shri Ramakrishna says how God is like. God has the nature of a child. God creates like this. Why is Shri Ramakrishna talking like that? Sometimes he says, we have come to this world to expend some of our Karma. Are these statements coming from Shri Ramakrishna to be taken as absolutely real? No you cannot. Why? Because there are statements from Shri Ramakrishna which are contrary to these. How do you take it? Well religion has to take care of all kinds of minds. Gita beautifully says न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम् - The wise should not create discord in the intellects of ignorant people, who are attached to fruitive actions, by inducing them to stop work. People of ordinary intellect, people of inferior intellect can understand religion only in terms they understand. For them, these statements are compulsory. But as you evolve, something extremely important in religion is evolution. You have to evolve. If you don't evolve spiritually ,there is something wrong with you. Swamiji beautifully says, in the inspired talks you will find, It is good to be born in a church. It is very bad to die there. I have been here in Ramakrishna mission for decades. Anyone can come and ask, what has been your achievement? How have we evolved? If I would say what I believed decades ago and I still hold on to that, then there is something seriously wrong. One needs to evolve. There has to be a journey and you have to evolve. Creation cannot be proved to be

real by any means. And worse creation serves no purpose. And this is the problem with the western world. Since God created this universe, there must be a purpose. And if there is purpose, since I am part of this creation I must have a purpose. So I must have a purpose in life, I must have a goal in life and this goal must be short term goal and long term goal and this goal that goal and mid term goal - total confusion. This is what modern corporate houses do! Total confusion. Vedanta does not accept all that says neither can creation be proved to be real nor does it serve any purpose. —----------

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Questions asked and answered.

Mr Santosh asked

Swamiji, does the journey to Advaita pass through Dvaita?

We have said how Dvaita, Vishist Advaita and Advaita seem compartmentalised. That means they have nothing in common. However Sri Ramakrishna has repeatedly talked about these three in the same breath. He also uses the example of Bael fruit, he says that the essence is the main pulp of Bael. Whereas seeds and the outer shell too are there. Mind it these are examples only. Then when Swamiji talks,, first comes Dualism, then comes Vishista Advaita, then comes Advaita. But not necessarily so., As Mr. Santosh is asking, it is not compulsory, If you Dvaita as a Bhava, Dvaita not as a philosophy but as a Bhava, then you will find that Sri Ramakrishna, even after attaining Advaita, very often stayed in Dvaita Bhava, That means even towards his end we find that he is talking to Mother Kali. When you are talking to Mother Kali, it is Dvaita. But that is a Bhava. That is your mental attitude. Your feelings. Philosophically if you say Dvaita is correct, in that case you can never go to Vishsita Advaita, nor ever to Advaita. So Dvaita and Vishishta Advaita are mental attitudes, or just as states, are perfectly alright. Nothing wrong with it. Then you cannot say that you go from Dvaita to Advaita and that Sri Ramakrishna is coming from Advaita back to Dvaita. In fact this is one of the arguments used by Dualists that even when you talk about Advaita in Samadhi etc, you come back to Dvaita. Because if you have to live in this world, you will have to have Dvaita. How will you eat food? You cannot eat food, if you see that you and food are the same, how can you eat?It is not possible. However these arguments are not really so profound because we never had such a wonderful example of a complete spiritual world before Sri Ramakrishna. For example when we had Sri Ramachandra, Sri Krishna, we have a description of Brahma, we have a description of Vishnu, a description of Shiva in different Purana, but we don't get the complete picture. Relatively good picture you get in Bhagavatam. It is one of the rarest books that gives us a lot of pictures. But reading in a book and seeing directly in life are two different things. We find how Shree Ramakrishna, who was at the level of Philosophy, dualism as philosophy. Because he was seeing mother Kali as real. From there he goes to Advaita, and then everything else becomes a state of mind. So duality becomes an attitude. Vishista Advaita becomes an attitude. Advaita remains the real. So Sri Ramakkrishna is moving between these three states. So Mr. Santosh you say that Journey to Advaita passes through Dvaita, no I don't think so. It is not a necessary step. One may but not essential.

Question: going from Dvaita to Advaita and again coming back is possible?

There have been cases when Sri Ramakrishna talks about Chaitanya samadhi. Sukdev had Chaitanya Samadhi. He was living in the state of Advaita. So it is not coming and going. They can live in that state. Not that you will always have to come down. Some come down. Some don't have to.

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35. Creation can be in Maya only

We are continuing with the logical aspect of Advaita. And while discussing the logical aspect, Gaudapada and then Acharya Shankar take the help of scriptures. Takes out the different statements of scriptures and both of them show how the dualistic approach to reality is not at all correct, not feasible, simply not acceptable.

Now, before I start, some of my friends, who listened to Mandukya Karika talk, keep saying that well, this is difficult. Well probably it is difficult. So that reminded me of a beautiful joke. There was one very successful manager. And he was leaving the company and he was requested by the company to handover the charge to the most competent person. So it was announced and the next day he gave some seeds, one seed each to some potential managers, 20-25 of them. He said that after 30 days, bring the plant. He said seed of such and such. So after 3 days, all came with a beautiful plant. And there was one gentleman, who said that he kept on watering plant the seed, but nothing came out. There was no shoot. Then the person who was apparently unsuccessful, he was declared to be manager. The outgoing manager said I had given you all fried seeds. They were not supposed to sprout. What these people had done, is that they watered and found that the seed was not sprouting. They went to the market, purchased seeds and came back with a plant. There was only one sincere honest gentleman, he kept trying but was not successful. He admitted, and it was revealed that he is the only person who was honest and sincere.

I read another story about one doctor teaching his undergraduate students how to listen to the heartbeat. So he passed on the stethoscope to all the students and asked can you hear the little dub dub. They all agreed that it was. Then he took the stethoscope, opened the earpiece and brought out pieces of cotton. He had stuffed cotton. He said see, in your desire to make me happy, in your desire to feel successful, you are accepting a lie. Do not accept a lie. If you don't understand, there is nothing wrong with it. It is perfectly alright if you do not understand, because it is a complicated subject.

Learning a subject is not difficult but learning a language is very difficult. Languages should not be treated as subjects. Language is not a subject. In language, the very alphabet, the words, they are entirely different. Mandukya Karika is not an ordinary scripture. It is warp and woof. Alphabets, words, terminology everything is different. So don't go by the popular

perception that people are listening to Mandukya Karika and understanding. No it is not easy. Now, before we continue with our discussion let me just tell you in brief what exactly all these arguments are about.

If you go by the Upanishads, it is repeatedly saying that Atman alone exists and Atman is infinite or immortal. Simple statement that is. Nothing complicated about it. Atman alone exists. Atman is immortal, Infinite. The moment you say it is infinite, it has many corollaries and all those corollaries are the nature of Atman. If it is infinite,it will be immortal, it cannot undergo any decay, it cannot have any birth, it cannot have any death and so on. That is what we have been discussing throughout. The thing is simple. And yet some of these people mock the religious systems and philosophy.They will say that Atman is born, soul is born. Something which is infinite, something which is immortal, how can it be born? Because if a thing is born, it will have to die. It is a very simple argument.

The second very important argument is that, many times the scriptures have said that there is no multiplicity. We have mentioned it earlier and will mention it again. नेह नानास्ति किंचन - there is nothing that is different, that is there is no multiplicity and मृत्योः स मृत्युमाप्नोति य इह नानेव पश्यति - one who sees multiplicity goes from death to death. The moment you combine these two statements, the conclusion is obvious. Creation cannot be real. By real we mean that which has the existence of its own, that which exists by its own rights. There can be no cause, there can be no effect, obviously. Actually if you listen to Mandukya Karika talk, you will fall in love with its amazing scriptural philosophy.

We will begin with verse no 24. But before we go to verse no 24, today I thought I will give you a little taste of western philosophy in the form of the thoughts of Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677). Those who have some brush with philosophy, might have heard the name of Spinoza. He was considered to be a great rationalist but rationalist in the matters of religion and ethics. Ethics is a famous philosophical treatise by him that explores the nature of God, the human mind, and how to live an ethical life. It is difficult to understand this work. Some say that it is better to first read some commentary on Ethics and then come to read Ethics to understand. That can make one fall in love with Philosophy.

Spinoza was a refugee , he was Jew and he started coming up with astounding questions and wonderful interpretations. The Jews tried to suppress his voice.They tried to bribe him, they cursed him and finally excommunicated him. Those of you who have read my book, Curving a sky, there I have described the scene of Spinoza's excommunication. You will find it in any Philosophy book. Even in the book by Will Durant. In fact I took it from Will Durant. Spinoza comes up with such rational explanations to scriptural statements, and he builds the argument so beautifully, that in today's rush world when people are rushing for money and

God is forgotten. I really feel sorry for these people that they never got a chance to taste this knowledge. In Bengal Rabindra Sangeet is so popular, and the beauty of Rabindra Sangeet is that even an ordinary labourer can hum a line or two from Rabindra Sangeet and the most cultured ones also do it. When you find these people, running for money, with no love for spirituality or philosophy or culture, you feel sorry for them. All the advantages that our ancestors had given us, through thousands of years of evolution and hard labour, are getting lost.

The arguments that Spinoza uses about this concept of infinity is beautiful. Spinoza comes up with a very simple premise, God is infinite. Something that Upaishads have been continuously talking about. In fact every religion talks about God being infinite. In the Upanishads they say Atman or Brahman. Now Spinoza uses the word God, so I am using the word God. God is infinite. Infinite means infinite to Spinoza, and infinite means infinite to me also. Whenever I deliver talks, whenever I write, I insist on this point. That infinite is infinite. What is the implication? God has to have infinite attributes. Surprisingly people like Ramanuja who belongs to Vishishta Advaita, also say the same thing - Ananta Gunanidhan, repository of infinite qualities. So, Spinoza says God has an infinite number of attributes. And just one of those attributes is thoughts as mind. And extension of it is matter.

The problem is when you keep the Bible and try to bring out the meaning everything goes to the Bible, then one has to become suspicious about it. If you are talking about free thinking go by free thinking, You need to get the ideas corroborated. In the case of Descartes, somewhere he got stuck up. Spinoza, who was not a man of religion, went by free thinking and explained the Bible. That is the beauty. For Descartes, thoughts and matter belong to the Cartesian divide - X axis and Y axis. Not to Spinoza. Surprisingly not to Vedanta also. And that is why, this pen as an idea, this pen as a word, and this pen as an object, these three are one and the same to the mind. To the mind all three are the same. Whether it is an idea or word or object, they are all the same. That is why in dreams, the mind creates all this. God being infinite, thoughts and matter they cannot be separate from Him. It is just an attribute of God. This particular argument is going to play a very important role.

Now we are not trying to explain Advaita Vedanta from the standpoint of Spinoza. I am just giving you a taste of how some great minds from the West nearly reached that level, though not fully. That is not possible for them. Advaita is beyond them.

So what Spinoza says is that thoughts and their extension, which is matter, are adjectival. That is they are not things by themselves. When you say Red horse, Red is an adjective. The thing in itself is the horse. Red is just an adjective, it is a quality. So, thoughts and matter and extension of thought , they are just attributes of God. Spinoza is saying this, Not Advaita. In Advaita of course we come across the same thing. Thus there can be no personal immortality.

Mukti of Dvaita and Vishishta Advaita, is negated by Spinoza, although he did not know these systems of thought. Infinite being infinite, either you say it is infinite, or you say it is not immortal. Immortality and infinite are one and the same. The moment you come to mind, thought or anything, that is an attribute of God. They are like adjectives. They don't have a separate existence. If there is no separate existence, it cannot have a separate immortality. So going to Heaven as the Christians discuss, and they consider that to be immortality, and in other religions too, is illogical as per Spinoza. And Spinoza was hated by the Christians. And yet they could not contradict him even today. What Spinoza says, finite things have boundaries, whenever for example, this pen has boundaries and this boundary is both physical and logical. Anything that has a boundary whether physical or logical, they are some kind of negation. Because the moment you determine something, determination is negation. When we say this pen, we are determined, this is the pen. So it is not only that this is, we think that we are pointing at this thing, but actually it is the negation of a thousand things, we don't even understand that. Negation, in Advaita Vedanta, is when we talk of Neti neti, it is negation of negation. Every boundary is a negation. And in Neti Neti, boundaries are removed, there is a negation of negation. So there is no positive affirmation, because it cannot be done. You cannot say that infinite is positive something. There cannot be any affirmation. It is negation of negation. And so there can be only one being who is really positive and must be absolutely infinite, that is God. Because everything else is some kind of negation. Positivity is only with God. So what is immortality? Immortality has to be impersonal. Mind it impersonal and it has to be more and more being one with God. Because God is infinite. Spinoza explains Mukti according to the Bible. This is what immortality means, this is what infinity means. Coming to Advaita, Spinoze has no knowledge of Advaita so he could not talk about Advaita.

Now anything that has a boundary, is finite. Finite cannot be immortal. Atman has been declared by Upanishad to be immortal. So Atman cannot have any boundaries. This is the argument that we have been running continuously. What is immortality? How can you be immortal? By growing more and more to the extent that finally you become one with Atman. Can you become one with Atman? Spinoza would have said no. And this is where Advaita Vedanta differs from every other system of religion. Advaita Vedangta you are already one with Atman. When Spinoza says that you become more and more one with God, because God is infinite, so from finite you become more with God.

Spinoza says, remove the limitations, this physical thing, anything in this world, whether it is matter or whatever it is, it has a limitation. In case of thought, there is a logical limit. In case of matter there is a physical limit. Remove those limitations. Because those limitations are superimpositions. Remove them, you become infinite. Liberation means removing all limiting adjuncts. I find it very interesting that Spinoza uses very simple argument, God is infinite and

everything about him has to be infinite . How do you explain finiteness? By attributes. What is an attribute? When we see that as a physical thing, it is a limitation. Get rid of those limitations. This is what Spinoza is basically talking about.

Now to Karika 24

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नेह नानेति चाऽऽम्नायादिन्द्रो मायाभिरित्यपि ॥

अजायमानो बहुधा मायया जायते तु सः ॥ Karika 24॥

From such Scriptural passages as “There is no multiplicity in Atman”, “Indra through Maya” , we know that the Atman though ever unborn, verily appears to have become many (only) through Maya.

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There are scriptural passages, like one does not see multiplicity in Atman, and Indra through his maya becomes many. So one knows that Atman, though even unborn, appears to become many through maya. Karika takes up certain scriptural statements and shows how scriptures have talked about multiplicity. And every now and then Karika also goes logically, directly. Multiplicity is there, no one doubts that, however the Shrutis, Scriptures say there is no multiplicity whatsoever. And the multiplicity that you see, is by the power of maya. Because, Indra becomes many, as in Veda. Acharya Shankar comes up with a very beautiful argument, says if the creation is real, if this pen was indeed created, that means creation is real, in that case why would scriptures go negating it? By scriptures we mean the Vedas and the Upanishads. Nowhere they say that Atman does not exist. Nowhere. That means if there is something, scriptures should not go contradicting. If the scriptures are saying that it does not exist that means there is something wrong with its existence.

Also, more importantly in other religions you find that there is one prophet who has told whatever that is there in that religion. Now if he has been silent on certain topics, well then the philosophers come up with the explanations. And in worldly matters if he has gone wrong somewhere, that mistake will continue to be there, as we see in some religions. But not so in Hinduism. Hinduism is not the product of one person. Not a product of one's mind, not a product of one’s sadhana. Many sages have contributed and they all have the same opinion. They are not talking differently. Sri Ramakrishna was also saying the same thing that we are discussing here. And he is talking not from the books, he is talking from his own experience. It is sad that the world does not know about this great treasure.

An objection may be raised that Maya is a state of mind. Maya is not a reality. So how does it relate to creation – srishti? It is through the power of mind that all the creation comes from. And this will now be discussed.

Isopanishad says any one, who has known Atman, one who has known the infinite, one who has known the oneness, he goes beyond sorrow. He goes beyond temptations, he goes beyond fear. A person goes beyond all the negative things that we abhor in real life. But

what is the condition? Destruction of multiplicity. So, go whatever way. Multiplicity is not acceptable, just not acceptable.

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सम्भूतेरपवादाच्च सम्भवः प्रतिषिध्यते ।

को न्वेनं जनयेदिति कारणं प्रतिषिध्यते ॥ Karika 25॥

Again, by the negation of creation (Sambhuti) the passing into the birth is refuted. Causality (in respect of Atman) is denied by such a statement as, " Who can cause it to pass into birth?"

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In the same Isopanisad, we come across, Sambhutim cha vinasham cha. (सम्भूतिञ्च विनाशञ्च) - Creation and dissolution. By the negation of the creation coming into birth is negated.

The causality of Brahman is denied by such statements as who can cause it to come into birth? So, the actual matra in Isopanisad is Andhamam tamah prabishanti, ya Vidyam upasate,

अन्धं तमः प्रविशन्ति येऽविद्यामुपासते।

ततो भूय इव ते तमो य उ विद्यायां रताः ॥

Into a blind darkness they enter who follow after the Ignorance, they as if into a greater darkness who devote themselves to the Knowledge alone.]

We explained it at that place. Says. anyone who worships Hiranyagarbha, (source from which creation takes place), enters darkness. Why? because that is the source of multiplicity. If you want to move in light, you have to go for the infinite, you cannot be in multiplicity. Says that, Sambhuti, creation, cause, cause and effect, had they been real, the Upanishads wouldn't have condemned it. Not only in negation, there is a positive condemnation.

There is a religion which talks about infinity, talks about multiplicity also. You don't accept the infinite off with your head. There is a problem with Semitic religions. I don't agree with you, so off with your head. That means on the one hand you are talking about the infinite and oneness, on the other hand you are accepting the multiplicity. How can these two be reconciled? This is what happens when religion and philosophy falls in the hands of the ignorant. The lower kinds of mind. The whole thing gets degenerated. Think of an Atomic Bomb falling in rogue hands. Atomic bomb falling in the hands of a terrorist organisation. What will the consequences be? The same thing happens with spirituality and religion too. If religion is managed by rogue elements, the consequences are disastrous.

Karika 25 says that if the cause and naturally the effect were real, the Upanishads would not have condemned them. That the upanishads are condemning them shows that there is no multiplicity. Here let us go back and think that every religion considers this world to be not as great, not as real as God. Sometimes it is accepted as a temporary phase, sometimes as this, sometimes as that, but no one considers the world to be as real as God.

Advaita goes one step further. It simply says that the world has absolutely no existence apart from Brahman. It does not have a reality of its own, nor can you say it does not exist. It very much exists. Exists but how? It is pure Brahman, pure Atman. The conclusion is that, if somebody can get out of Avidya, i.e. ignorance, and get established in truth he gets established in his own real form. Swarup. So who can create him? How can there be creation? If you know your true nature, if you get established in your true nature, then you know that you are infinite. Now just imagine, you believe the words of the scriptures and you go all out to realise this infinite nature of yours. Once you realise this infinite nature of yours, infinite has to be immortal, immortal means you cannot have death. If you don't have death, then definitely you did not have birth. So how could anybody have created you? This is mind boggling. That is the only word you can use. Just remember this first point that we had mentioned in the beginning. Scriptures are continuously saying that you are Atman and Atman is immortal, infinite. The conclusions that follow are just mind boggling. And to realise that, to know that truth, you don't have to die. Unlike in other religions where they say, you die and go to heaven.

We had one senior monk here at Belur Math. He used to say jokingly that Hindu scriptures say that if you die at Kashi, you will have mukti, liberation. So to get liberation, you have to die. But here at Belur Math, you don't have to die. While living you can have Mukti. He was a great monk, but jokingly he used to say this. Why should I believe in something, which will happen to me, which I will experience after my death? I want to see it now, here. Let me see. It is a different matter that I cannot realise the Atman, I don't have that capacity but there are people who have claimed that yes they have. And their influence on this world and all that they have done is palpable. Everyone knows it. ‘

Now to verse no 26

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स एष नेति नेतीति व्याख्यातं निह्नुते यतः ।

सर्वमग्राह्यभावेन हेतुनाऽजं प्रकाशते ॥ Karika 26॥

As the Sruti passage, “It is not this, it is not this”, on account of incomprehensibility of Atman, negates all (dualistic) ideas described; (as the means of attainment of Atman), therefore birthless (Atman alone) exists (and not any duality)

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The incomprehensible nature of Atman is the problem. The mind is finite, Atman is infinite. So, mind cannot grasp Atman. So, Scriptural passages keep on talking about Neti Neti. As we already mentioned that when they say Neti Neti, not this, not this,, it is a negation of negation. Everything finite is in some form of limitation, that is negation of infinity. Now the scriptural passages talk about not this, not this. Is this pen God? They will say No no, not this. Negation of finite. Is this microphone God? No it is not. Negation of this. Verse 26 is

very interesting. Atman is incomprehensible. So scriptures say not this, not this. Negation of negation all dualistic ideas attributed to Atman.

Coming back to Spinoza, where he says attributes and he discusses finite. The moment you are putting a limit, it becomes finite. Nothing finite can belong to God. Whatever that might be, finite thoughts, finite objects, whatever it is, whatever it is, it is not God. It may be an attribute of God, at least for our understanding. What Advaita Vedanta says is that don't go by attributes. Go for the real. If there is anything finite, it is limited. Negate the limitedness. Advaita is all about negating limitedness. That is why they talk about not this not this. If you go by scriptural statement, not this not this, the only conclusion is Atman alone exists. Says, whatever you come up with, it will say, no no, not this, why?The moment you point at something, pointing at something means limiting it. As Spinoza says, limiting it means actually it is negation. Because every determination is a negation, every determination is negation. What Advaita Vedant does is that it negates any kind of determination. Determination is duality, Birth is duality, so it is a determination. Death is determination, it is duality. Advait vedanta negates. Now since every duality is a determination, and determination is some kind of negation, Advaita Vedanta negates any such negation. So it comes with beautiful sloka in Karika 27.

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सतो हि मायया जन्म युज्यते न तु तत्त्वतः ।
तत्त्वतो जायते यस्य जातं तस्य हि जायते ॥ Karika 27॥

That which is ever existent appears to pass into birth through illusion (Maya) and not from the standpoint of Reality. He who thinks that this passing into birth is real asserts, as a matter of fact.that what is born is born again (and so on without end).

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What is ever existent is Atman. It appears to pass into birth through Maya. So are we born. But this birth is not real. It appears through Maya. Yet from the standpoint of reality it doesn't look so. From the standpoint of Atman, it cannot have. From a relative standpoint, yes. But he who thinks this passing into birth is real, asserts as a matter of fact that what is born, passes into birth again. That means, since Atman alone exists, nothing else exists other than Atman. Infinite means infinite. There cannot be any birth.

I find it very surprising for a person like Spinoza who went to the extent of telling that there is infinity and comes up with attributes, and as if God the infinite and His attributes are two different things.

Ultimately every form of knowledge is only a shortcut, only a tunnel to knowledge. So there is no “branch of knowledge” but tunnel to knowledge, shortcut to knowledge. We discussed earlier that every subject is a shortcut to knowledge. Every knowledge starts from common sense. There is a very famous saying in English - “ it is not rocket science”. But remember even rocket science starts from common sense. It begins from common sense. Goes on

becoming more and more complex. Same with Philosophy, same with Physics. Somehow Spinoza missed what is real, and that real can never be born, truly. It can be born through Maya but not truly. And even those who believe that there is birth, birth is possible, birth is reality, they also admit that only that which can be born, which has the property to be born gets born. But Atman does not have the property to be born. Atman is immortal. So somewhere you are contradicting yourself.

To be very honest, I find dualistic approach extremely confusing, but not Bhakti. Bhakti has nothing to do with dualistic approach. And it is the dualists who have forcibly taken Bhakti as their philosophy. Advaita does not contradict Bhakti. As we mentioned one or two classes back, dualists have problems with themselves and dualists have problems with Advaitins. It is like a drunkard, like a mad man, standing on the ground, challenging an elephant rider, come come I will fight with you. It is something like that. And they were great masters, definitely great spiritual persons, I have no right to criticise them. But I find that it is pretty strange. Advaita alone is scientific. Nothing else is scientific. The bottom line is the perception of the universe, that we are able to perceive this universe, I am able to perceive this pen, this microphone, this itself proves the existence of Atman. Even though this knowledge is subtle. This is the problem. Scriptures are continuously telling that Atman is there, Atman is infinite etc. And we are able to perceive this world, that we are able to perceive the world that is the highest form of Atman that we can perceive while being in this body. Partly we have discussed it and we shall continue to discuss.

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असतो मायया जन्म तत्त्वतो नैव युज्यते ।

वन्ध्यापुत्रो न तत्त्वेन मायया वाऽपि जायते ॥ Karika 28॥

The unreal cannot be born either really or through Maya. For the son of a barren woman is neither in reality nor in illusion.

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It is a very interesting verse . The unreal cannot be born, either really or through Maya. If something is unreal, how can it be born? It is like the son of a barren woman. If a woman is barren, she cannot have a son. If she has a son, the woman is not barren. The son of a barren woman cannot be born either through reality or through Maya. This pen, either it is Atman, or it is not. If it is not Atman, it is unreal. If it is unreal, it cannot have come into existence. Either really or through Maya. So what is this pen? It has to be Atman. Combine verse 27 and 28.

The real appears as many through Maya. The unreal, as Gita says, नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः – Nasato Vidyate Bhabo, na bhabo vidyate sato, the real never becomes non existent, that which is unreal never comes into existence. Pen as pen has no existence. Pen

as Atman, has an existence for ever. So why am I seeing it as a pen? This is the play of Maya. We shall continue to explain further.

36. Mind creates dream and waking

Mandukya Karika is not an easy text and difficult to understand. This difficulty is basically due to lack of exposure. If you keep listening to these talks slowly the ideas will start becoming clear. And you will find what wonderful subjects Upanishads or Karika or Indian philosophies are. When you don't have exposure the whole thing comes as new and seems difficult.

There are some books I love to read. One is about western civilization, “From Dawn to Decadence” by Jacques Barzun. It is one of my very favourite books. I was praising this book to some of my friends and gave it to them to read. They returned it after reading maybe 2 or 5 pages. It was because they did not have exposure to History. It is the same with Science. If you try to study the history of modern science, you will find most things to be absolutely new because you are not exposed. Once you start reading, things become gradually clear to you.

We had ended at verse 28 where it said anything which is non-existing, i.e Asat, cannot be born either in real terms or in imaginary terms. Because birth means something really coming out. Now from there,we have verse no 29, 30, 31 these deal with the nature of mind from the standpoint of Advaita. Mind from the standpoint of Advaita is an extremely fascinating thing.

Before we discuss these verses, let us discuss something I read in a scientific paper on certain terms that come in quantum physics - modern times, brain and mind. They call it relatability. Their observation regarding the brain and how we know things is very interesting. It begins with a situation. Think of the situation when a tree falls in the forest and there is no observer. So what happens? This paper is from that point. A tree falls and you hear the sound of the crash. This is normal, you might have seen. For example when I am talking to you, my words reach your ears and you get a meaning out of it. But am I really producing sound? Actually when I talk, the vocal system is generating changes in pressure in the air, which causes waves and these waves reach our ear in the form of change of pressure, the brain senses it through the nervous system and we hear. The same thing happens when the tree falls. In certain sudden high sounds, for example a bomb blast, the pressure may hit you in the chest and one will be thrown off to the ground. So essentially it is only air

pressure. So the conclusion is you don't hear with your ears, but you hear with your brain. We are just giving you an idea how present day scientists feel about objectivity, subjectivity etc..

More interesting is say for example you watch a flower, say a rose. As Shakespeare famously said “what is there in a name”? I am told that red roses are more popular with the younger generation. Elders probably like white more. Do roses have colours? The gentleman who wrote this article, has beautifully said that the correct way of telling a red rose would be I experience the wavelength of the light reflecting from the rose as red. Very interesting. If you talk to any physicist, he will say that roses do not have red colour. Redness as colour does not belong to the rose. The light coming from the Sun hits the rose, a certain wave of light whose wavelength is related to the colour red, is reflected, the eye catches that wave and the red colour is seen. So when you say red rose, are you actually seeing red rose, or are you seeing or experiencing light with a certain wavelength? How disturbing.

Nowadays I am told, during our time, when I was a student we did not have things like Valentine’s day and all. I read somewhere that there was a saint, Saint Valentine, but in the present day market of consumerism they can make business out of anything. I am told that in the west, they even have a business when a person dies, there is a whole business based out of that. So, red roses are extremely popular, especially among the young, during a particular season. But speaking strictly from the standpoint of physics, if you are being scientific, will you say Red rose? No, you will say, I experience the wavelength of light reflecting from the rose as red. The redness is not in the rose. The redness is in your head. As a kid, when as a kid, we were told that this rose is red. Our elders who had a particular culture, who lived in a particular society, who had particular experiences, they taught us if you say something like this or if you experience something like this, this is to be known as red rose. We continue with that and we pass on that very information to the next generation. People who are into the marketing business make money out of this. More important is touch. You know that touch is one of those five senses. but what about they say wetness, for example when you take a bath , how do you know that you are wet. Because something touches you that is not related to the idea of wetness. It is very interesting. When you take a bath, when you have certain kinds of physical sensations born of humidity or getting wet, you call it wetness. So what is happening? There are certain sensations reaching the brain and the brain combines all these physical sensations and creates a reality for us. So what you see is not reality. What your brain constructs is reality. This is now everyday becoming more and more popular amongst the so-called scientific community. We have known it for thousands of years.

What exactly does the brain do? We are not going into the mind yet. We will go into mind later. As we experience the world, the brain constantly keeps on updating the model. And the sense organs that we have, the brain keeps on collecting the data and through that, It keeps on creating a model from our past experiences, imaginations etc.. Conclusion is you cannot experience the world and even your own body objectively. Everything is subjective. Because the brain is continuously constructing a model for us. And the knowledge that we have, we call it our world. When people ask, is it scientific? They don't even realise that in true sense there cannot be any science. Because science is dependent entirely on objectivity. But the brain's internal model is formed from the data of sensory signals, from our past etc.. Not only that when we go into the future, we start thinking of something, or when we recall the past, there is also a certain kind of model being created. When you think of the past, when you think of the future, the brain creates a model. And this happens during our dreams too. We will be discussing that.

But much more than all this is that the brain creates “meaning”. There is this huge junkyard of data, and the brain creates meaning out of it. The brain does not detect features in the world. When you are searching for something, you go to a junkyard, search for something. But the brain doesn't do that. What it does is that it constructs features to create meaning. And you will be surprised to know that this is best understood during dreams. During dreams, there are no objects. And yet the brain creates , constructs features. When we are looking at something, when we are looking at the world, we are searching for a meaning. I am speaking strictly from a scientific journal. Well it sounds like Mandukya Karika.

Then there are physical features which are more elaborate and then there are mental features which are not so elaborate. That is why ideas like quality are mental features. So we are not very clear about that. But then what has that to do with our work? Whatever we are doing. Well this is where our discussion comes into play.

You can fully influence your internal model and change your internal model. You can recreate your internal model. Are you suffering in life? Do you feel a vacuum in life? Are you a slave to your emotions? Do you get scared? Do you get angry? It is all because of a faulty inner model. How to change it? The journal says by exposing yourself to people and here I also add ideas.

Let me tell you something very personal from my life. Now like any other I was also born in a family, I also had parents. Monks don't fall from the sky. I grew up in a society and left society when I was pretty young. After many years, I chanced to meet some from that very society and one of the comments that I had heard in appreciation was that in no way you look like one of us. It is a very interesting comment and I loved it. In no way, in your demeanour, in your language, in your behaviour, in no way you look like one of us. I wanted to tell that look, it is not because I am different. Had I been in society, I would have been just

like any one of you. I look different, I think differently, I think differently why? Because I have lived with people who think differently. I live with ideas that are absolutely different compared to the ideas with which you love. You are born in a particular family, you have lived all through in that family and so ideas continue to be the same. Now if you are suffering means naturally you cannot give up your society, you cannot give up your family. But what you can do is to associate with different kinds of people who have different kinds of ideas. And your thinking will change, what do we mean by saying that thinking will change? According to this model, where the brain plays an important role, the internal model itself will change. So when you walk through the universe , through the world, the model that was continuously created by the brain, will alter and your experiences will change. But the choice is not unlimited. You have a very limited choice. Even when I did not know all these in such detail, I knew that you can take only one step at a time. For example, if you are suddenly to be made a monk, not that you will acquire monkhood in a day. It takes time. Our choices are extremely limited. So what I was telling was from a scientific paper which discusses objectivity and subjectivity. And from there we come to mind. What this paper was essentially discussing was a functional model of the brain. And they will call it mind.
Those of you who are deeply interested in knowing about the mind, I request you to listen to our Rajayog talks, at least the first 2-3 talks, about the mind. There we have discussed it in detail.
According to the materialists, and the scientists are materialists, the mind is some kind of function of the brain as we have just mentioned.
In Indian tradition creation is affected by nature and nature is composed of three qualities known as Sattwa, Rajas and Tamas. And when it evolves, the first is the cosmic mind. And the cosmic mind is the finest of the particles that we can think of, or that exists. It can be experienced only during Samadhi, not necessarily the nirvikalpa samadhi. Those of you who want to know more about this please refer to our Raja Yog talks There we have discussed.
As the mind becomes more and more concentrated, one starts exploring the empire of the mind, not the universe. If you are a voyager, if you are a traveller, you will be exploring the universe. But when you become a Yogi, you start exploring the mind. As your mind becomes more and more focussed, your mind becomes one with the cosmic mind, and you realise that you are now the creator of the whole universe, master of the whole universe. If you can crack that too, which is extremely rare, theoretically yes, practically no, one realises that consciousness alone exists.
We can talk theoretically about God realisation, we can talk theoretically about Advaita. That is simple. But realising that truth is not easy. If you can somehow transcend your mind, you realise that consciousness alone exists. This is an extremely important point.

Consciousness alone exists which is known as Brahman or Arman, Shudhha Chaitanyo, pure chaitanya etc.
Then where does the multiplicity come from? Now we are going in a different direction. We are no more into the brain and the mind. Sri Ramkrishna or one of the sages, who could go into the deepest state of Samadhi, where he experienced that consciousness alone exists. Atman alone exists. Where does this multiplicity come from? Why is this multiplicity?
In Christian traditions they say, in the beginning was word, the word was with God, word was God. The idea is in the beginning there was only God whatever the nature of God. Of course every Christian will tell you the same thing. Consciousness that is all powerful, all merciful or whatever that is. So God was one and those no matter where from this multiplicity comes. Christians want the grace of God, by submitting to his will, by submitting oneself but hoping that when there is that ultimate judgement day, he or she will be sent to eternal heaven, whatever that might mean. It has a spiritual connotation but let us not get into it.
However as far as our Indian tradition is concerned, Yog is concerned, you can experience that highest state here and now.
Suppose you experience that Atman alone exists then where the multiplicity comes from? Actually there is no answer to it. Personally I am fascinated by this problem. Mind fascinates me, and I love to study mind. Whenever I meet somebody, whenever I go through some book or some kind of creativity I try to understand what might be going on in this person's mind.
That creation is an idea, how does the mind get that idea? I find this subject extremely fascinating and more fascinating than this is pure consciousness and how it appears as this universe. Why there is multiplicity? this infinite variety? Actually there is no answer to it. Even in Mandukya Upanishad there is no answer to it.
Now how do I imagine it? This is pure imagination and I have not read it anywhere. This is the solution I have found. This is the only sensible solution that I can think of. We know Atman alone exists, Brahman alone exists. Consciousness alone exists. Consciousness by its very nature can think of anything else. Because this is not mind. This is consciousness. Now imagine a situation when consciousness thinks of itself as knowing being. Consciousness can never be a knowing being. And even Mandukya Karika will discuss that. There is only consciousness, there being only consciousness there is no subject object duality. Since there is no subject object duality there cannot be any knowing. Now imagine a situation where consciousness thinks of itself as a knowing being. The moment it thinks of , mind it the word is think, the change is not real. It becomes mind/ Mind now is looking at consciousness. The consciousness which is pure unalloyed, is now being looked at itself, by itself but through a process known as knowing which is mind. But mind has no separate existence. The mind cannot have a separate existence. If the mind has a separate

existence it will be equivalent to telling as there is God and there is matter. And God takes this matter to fashion this world. It is pretty stupid. God cannot do that. God is all powerful. He does not need matter to create this universe. Consciousness does not require anything else to create this world. What it does is, being of the nature of consciousness, it thinks of itself as a knowing being. The moment it thinks of as a knowing being, there is some apparent change which we call mind. Now the creation of the universe is a matter of seconds. Because infinite consciousness is there. Infinite consciousness is already there. Now you just start looking at it through a lens and that lens is constantly changing. My mind is constantly changing. As we mentioned just now the brain is continuously making a running model. So when consciousness looks at itself, through itself, as a knowing being, which is now "mind", the universe is there. This is what I worked out by myself, and it is in accordance to our scriptures.

But if you can understand it, if you can imagine what I said just now, you will find the whole thing absolutely simple. The multiplicity is what that mind sees. Actually it has no equivalence in this world. Because it has no equivalence, that is why there can be no example.

How does it really happen? We can only say that you can only take some kind of lens, some prism, that keeps on changing the appearance in front of us. One you take this then you realise that Atma which is pure, that very pure Atman appears as pure mind. Pure mind, the knowing mind, it is one with Atman and that which determines the meaning from this universe, known as Buddhi –intellect. And that is why Sri Raakrishna said Shuddha man(Pure mind) Shuddha buddhi (Pure intellect). Shuddha Atma (pure Atman) are all one. So where lies the difference? Atma is never impure, Atman is always Atman. It is the mind which is at times pure and at times impure. Impure in the sense when it considered itself as a knowing being, as an instrument of knowledge, is now impure. It creates the universe. But the Universe has no objective reality. What is spirituality then? It is to realise that the mind does not have a separate existence. Mind is actually no-mind. It does not have any separate existence of its own. Now in Raja Yog, in Yog tradition, the mind has existence. But in Vedanta it does not have. Now because the mind does not have a separate existence, yet it appears as separate. And in this world, the world in which we live, the world we are familiar with, the model through which we experience this world, is the world of this mind, individual mind, which creates the world through a working model of the brain. So the working model of the brain, mind, and Atman are one and the same thing. Just that the impurity level is increasing. Nothing else. This idea will be discussed in the next two three verses.

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यथा स्वप्ने द्वयाभासं स्पन्दते मायया मनः ।

तथा जाग्रद्द्वयाभासं स्पन्दते मायया मनः ॥Karika 29॥

As in dream the mind acts through Maya presenting the appearance of duality, so also in the waking state the mind acts through Maya, presenting the appearance of duality.
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The moment you bring in mind, the moment you bring a functional model of the brain, the brain is continuously creating a working model, a functional model. Ear;ier I mentioned a story.

A person had gone to book a telegram and there was the telegram man. As the gentleman was writing his telegram, and the person who used to send the telegram, he dozed off. And he dreamt. He dreamt that he had become a soldier, fighting a huge war. There was an attack on him and finally he fell down from his horse and he was about to die. And he woke up from the dream, startled and found that his pen had dropped from his hand on the desk. It had made a thud and the thud that was what he experienced during his dream as his falling dead. So he was kind of embarrassed and he asked the gentleman Sir, did I keep you waiting for long? The gentleman said no Sir, it took me less than a minute to write this telegram. So the dream was for hardly one or two minutes, and during this time the gentleman dozed off and he experienced a long dream. We have all experienced traveling by bus or train, sometimes we doze off, maybe for a minute or two and in that period the brain creates a long fascinating story, just with the sensations that come to us during those hours. So for example if you are perspiring you may experience it as if you are swimming somewhere. Things like that. If somebody comes knocking at your door, the knocking sound is woven into that dream pattern. Why ? because the brain is creating a functional model for us. So how is the dream state different from the waking state? Actually it is not. As we mentioned earlier, they are only sensations. When a tree falls there is a change in air pressure, the changed air pressure reaches our ears and the brain creates sound. The sound that we experience is no external sound. It is experienced by the brain. So the brain continuously creates a story.

Swamiji tells us that this world is just a story that we have created. We create the story. Without studying Vedanta you cannot understand the world, you cannot understand yourself, you cannot get out of your problems, you cannot get out of your miseries. As in dreams the mind acts through Maya. Basically when it says that the mind acts through Maya, the brain creates a functional model, presenting the appearance of duality, the sensations. The same happens in the waking state, the mind acts through Maya, presenting the appearance of duality. Now if you go by the model that I presented, it is the consciousness experience itself, consciousness through a desire that I want to experience, through a desire that I want to know it. Consciousness knows itself, but through a desire that I want to know it. Consciousness knows itself but through the act of knowing now it appears as mind. This is Maya. Mind is Maya. Now through the process of knowing, the same consciousness now

becomes the subject and the same consciousness now appears as the object. And same consciousness also as the instrument of knowing. Subject, object, the process of knowing, that is this drama of the entire universe going on. It is only that there can be no other explanation, believe me. And I have been working on it for years now. It has always puzzled me. If you just try to relate what Sri Ramakrishna experienced in Samadhi, and what he has described later many times, he also talks about chetan samadhi - conscious samadhi and the multiplicity in the universe. How do you relate these two? How do you relate Advaita with the reality of this universe? The only process is what I have told you. Consciousness has a kind of desire to know itself. That desire itself is the mind now. Mind is impure. Because it wills.

Acharya Shankar explains and it is a beautiful explanation. There is a rope. You imagine a snake. When you know the reality, then you realise that the snake is a rope only. Just like that once you know the truth, once you have been into samadhi, you realise that mind is nothing but Atman itself.

Does the mind get destroyed? No, the mind is not destroyed in the sense that we understand. Because what we are thinking of as mind, is actually Brahman only. There is no way of explaining it, other than what was explained earlier. That consciousness wishes kind of, to see itself, to experience itself. This wish is now the desire to know. This desire to know now appears as mind. And this is what is being said.

Acharya Shankar said that once you have experienced Atman, through knowledge, you realise that mind is also Sat, it has its existence, but not as mind, but as Brahman, as Atman. This is what Sri Ramakrishna said. He never studied Mandulya Karika. Said Shuddha Man, Shuddha Buddhi, Shuddha Atma they are all one. Pure mind, pure intellect, Pure Atma they are one and the same. So it is the mind which is kind of creating sensations. There is some kind of scintillation but the exact term is स्फुरण - Sfuran. Scintillation is in the dream state, Scintillation is there also in the waking state. In the waking state we call it the world, and when we are sleeping, we say it is dream. Essentially there is no difference; they are only some sensations, coming through our senses. That is why Swamiji said instead five, if we have six senses, would have experienced this world differently. The creatures who have less number of sense organs experience the world differently. We are into three dimensions and five senses. We are experiencing the world like this. Imagine a universe where there are more dimensions. If you go by the string theory of Physics, there can be universes with many more dimensions. And now imagine there beings with more number of senses. They will experience the world absolutely differently. Their brains will be getting many more kinds of sensations. And because the story that the brain will be creating, the functional model will

be different. So they will say that they have a different kind of mind. But actually what is happening? The consciousness is knowing consciousness, nothing else.

Now to Karika 30

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अद्वयं च द्वयाभासं मनः स्वप्ने न संशयः ।

अद्वयं च द्वयाभासं तथा जाग्रन्न संशयः ॥ Karika 30॥

There is no doubt that the mind , which is, in fact , non-dual appears as dual in dream; in the like manner undoubtedly that which is non-dual, appears as dual in the waking state also.

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There is no doubt that the mind is non-dual, the mind is Atman. However when you go by Yog Philosophy, the mind will never be treated as purusha there. In Yog philosophy, consciousness and mind are separate. Mind is reflected consciousness, but it is separate. Mind belongs completely to nature. However in Vedanta mind and Atman are the same. Just that It appears differently. So there is no doubt that the mind which is in reality non-dual, appears to be dual in dreams. There is no doubt that what is non-dual., Atman appears as dual in the waking state as well. It is the same Atman that appears in dreams and in the waking state as the mind. Because of certain conditions, it makes us feel that it is a dream. And because of certain other conditions as the waking state. It is the function model of the brain that creates the idea of past and present and past and future too. Just like that it creates the idea of dream and waking. Mind is non-different from Atman. For example during a dream, we might see that we are travelling by a train. Is there a train? No. There is no train. So how does the brain construct the train? In whatever process, it is just certain sensations exactly as the same thing is happening in the waking state. There is only Atman and the mind is experiencing Atman, one unified consciousness, then how can you have a different reality in the waking state and different reality in the dream state. That is just not possible.

37. The state of no mind

We start with Verse 31

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मनोदृश्यमिदं द्वैतं यत्किञ्चित्सचराचरम् ।

मनसो ह्यमनीभावे द्वैतं नैवोपलभ्यते ॥ Karika 31॥

All these dual objects, comprising everything that is movable and immovable, perceived by the mind (are mind alone). For duality is never experienced when the mind ceases to act.

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All the multiple objects comprising the movable and the immovable are perceived by the mind alone, for duality is never perceived when the mind ceases to act. This is something very difficult.

What is the meaning of the mind ceasing to act? The term they use is Amani (अमनी).

When the mind ceases to act, multiplicity ceases. Multiplicity is the construct of the mind. It is not the reality of the universe as we mentioned earlier. What you think of reality is not reality. It is certain sensations coming to you and the brain creates a functional model.

Thus a new concept is introduced - the concept of no mind, the state of no mind. Those of you who have studied Raja Yog, or have listened to Advaita here might have come across the term “no-mind”. What exactly is no-mind and why no-mind? What are the consequences of no-mind? We will be discussing these.

The sanskrit word for it is Amani-bhava (अमनीभाव . Man (मन) is mind. When you add A (अ), it implies NO, Not. Something like un is english (example worthy - unworthy). So just like that when you add A it negates the implications. Amani-bhava. Those who are really curious about spiritual life and aspire for the highest states of spiritual life would find these things pretty interesting because every spiritual seeker has to go through this. We all have to go through today or tomorrow, maybe in the next birth or maybe after ten, or hundred or thousands of births to attain Brahman.

Now this is not an easy concept to understand. Not because the subject is difficult, but because we have never got exposure to these ideas. I remember one very funny incident when I was a young monk. That means I already had my Sanyas, after 9 years of being a Brahmachari in the Ramakrishna Mission. That is a pretty long time. I was at a centre and there I persuaded four monks, three of them senior to me, to study Mandukya Karika. One of us would read the Sanskrit text and another one would read the English and then we would discuss.. After four or five days, maybe we have covered just five or seven pages, a very senior monk said that this is utter nonsense. Ai Ramakrishna Mission monks need not read Mandukya Karika. It is studied during the Brahmachari stage, before becoming a monk. What he meant is “Stop this”. He himself was learned to some extent and I always thought that he was one of those Vedantic monks, who is interested in renunciation. Mandukya Karika is for people who are ready to give up everything. But he found a wonderful excuse - if you have to be a monk after reading Mandukya Karika, not that you should study Mandukya Karika after becoming monks. And that was the end of it. This was way back in 1992.

People talk a lot about Advaita, but it is not easy. Its ramifications, its implications are huge. Here we are talking about the state of no mind. Earlier it was explained that the mind creates delusion, mind creates multiplicity. That is terrifying. In fact Mandulya Karika will say this, it is terrifying.The idea that this pen, this microphone, me and this huge multiplicity before us, all this, everything that we

see is product of my mind. They don't have absolute existence! How terrifying! What this verse says is that all these multiple objects comprising the movable and the immovable, that is the general expression they use in Sanskrit (Jada & chaitanya - जड़ चैतन्य) , are perceived by mind alone. Not only perceives, but creates. For duality is never perceived when the mind ceases to act.

The mind ceases to act under different conditions. Like when it ceases to act we are not aware of it. But when we come out of it, we know that mind was not acting, the mind was not working. More importantly there was no multiplicity. For example in the case of dreams we have multiplicity. When we close our eyes and think, there is multiplicity. Multiplicity of thoughts, But there are conditions when the mind ceases to act and we see that there is no multiplicity.

The philosophical premise is that entire duality is due to mind. Mind is duality. The mind does not perceive duality as such. Mind creates duality, so the mind is duality. In the previous talk we discussed how consciousness itself becomes mind and perceives the infinite as the multiplicity.

I can tell you that, if you try to apply this in your daily life,even for a while, the first thing is that it gives you a tremendous amount of peace. Initially you will get scared. It is frightening. Sri Ramakrishna had touched Narendranath Datta, later Swami Vivekananda and he suddenly felt that everything, the room and everything was moving rapidly, circling rapidly and everything was as if getting sucked into emptiness. Other than him, there was nothing else left. And he cried out in fear. And said, what are you doing? I have my parents. So two things were happening. Narendranath, as he was known those days, his sense of I-ness was preserved; everything else was vanishing. This is the state when you really feel that multiplicity does not exist, but what we are discussing here in Mandukya Karika is where the sense of I-ness also goes away. But when you are coming back to the state of mind, when you are coming back from that state of unification of whatever kind, back to multiplicity, the first thing you become conscious of, is I-ness. Those of you who have listened to my talks on Isopanisad, It says Tadejadi, tannaijadi tad dure tadanthike (तदेजति तन्नैजति तद् दूरे तद्वन्तिके,

तदन्तरस्य सर्वस्य तदु सर्वस्यास्य बाह्यतः ॥That moves and That moves not; That is far and the same is near; That is within all this and That also is outside all this.) . and अनेजदेकं मनसो जवीयो नैनद्देवा आप्नुवन् पूर्वमर्षत्। तद्धावतोऽन्यानत्येति तिष्ठत् तस्मिन्नपो मातरिश्वा दधाति ॥ ॥४॥ There is the One and It moveth not, yet is It swifter than thought, the Gods could not overtake It as It moved in front. While It standeth still, It outstrippeth others as they run. In It Matariswan ordered the waters.") when Atman moved even the Gods, the senses, including mind, could not catch it.

Because see, when you think of yourself, say I am sitting here in Kolkata and suppose I think of Delhi, I start thinking of Delhi. Before my mind reaches Delhi and I start thinking of Delhi, my I-ness reaches there. Unless my I-ness reaches there I cannot think of Delhi. So Atman reaches there first, mind reaches next. Dear listeners, it is mind boggling that seven - eight thousand years ago sages when level of education as we understand was nothing like what we have today, there was no communication as we have today, see, how in the depths of meditation they had realised fundamental truths like तदेजति तन्नैजति तद् दूरे तद्वन्तिके - it moves, yet it moves not. It is far, yet it is near. Even the gods cannot catch it. It is faster.

Here the premise is that duality and mind is the same. Mind is duality. By duality we mean multiplicity. So the term they use is when you reach the state of no-mind, you realise that there is no multiplicity. The state of no-mind is reached via different methods

Acharya Shankar explains that when mind becomes concentrated, when mind becomes fully concentrated through repeated practice and through discrimination, giving up, through renunciation. We will now move slightly to Yog. I would request you to listen to Raja Yog talks. Once you understand Raja Yog, these phenomena can be understood easily. Raja Yog talks about different states of mind. Vikhshipt (Scattered). Mudha (dull, lethargic) , Ekagra (concentrated, one pointed) and Nirodhha (mind is mastered and completely agitation free). Knowledge of Brahman dawns only when mind is concentrated. And the state of concentration is when it is chitta vritti nirodha, when the mind is free of all agitations.All the mental modifications have to cease completely. This has been discussed earlier. Then as Sri Ramakrishna says, Shuddha Man (pure mind) , Shuddha Buddhi (pure intellect) , Shuddha Atma (Atman) become one. Mind, intellect, atman, they all become one.

To give you a very simple analogy, think of mind as a lake. And the waves and ripples as vritti - function of the mind. Mind is mind only till it is functioning. That means till the time there are ripples, till the time there are waves in the mind it is known as mind. The moment, production of ripples, production of waves stops, you cannot call it mind any more. Then what is it?

Imagine, there is a pond and there are ripples, and ripples cease to exist. Will you say that there is no water? No you cannot. You can say that there is no more wave. Interestingly, in Vedanta, in scriptures they say it is no mind. It is the stoppage of vritti, it is the stoppage of mental waves but the expression used is no mind. It is a very interesting thing.

In Yog philosophy, the mind is a reality. Because the mind comes from Prakriti, nature. Nature is a reality, the existence of mind is independent of consciousness –Atman. These are slightly technical. According to Samkhya philosophy and Yog philosophy, Purush and Prakriti, consciousness and matter, both have their individual realities. Prakriti is as real as Purusha. So, the mind is as real as Purusha. But the mind does not have the same power as

Purusha. But in Vedanta, there is only Purusaha – Atman. So when the mind stops functioning,it is no more mind. This idea will be explained later.

This verse is saying that when you practice renunciation, when you practice discrimination i.e. Jnana Yog, discrimination is when you discriminate and say, this is consciousness and this is matter. This belongs to the realm of matter and I will give it up. When you are continuously into it, practicing and practicing, you reach that state where you see only oneness. There is no more multiplicity. And this happens in deep sleep too. When you go to deep sleep (sushupti), the mind becomes functionless. When you get up, you suddenly get disoriented, where am I? Or sometimes when you become unconscious, (murchcha), whether that be drug induced or because of some malfunctioning of your brain, the brain stops telling the mind. So we are not aware of what is happening. During those moments too, multiplicity ceases to exist. So, this is the example that our Advaitins use.

To counter this the dualists say that even after Nirvikalpa samadhi, you have to come back to the state of mind. So the mind is a reality. But we are not going into all that detail because they are great scholars, many of them are great sages, who are we to contradict them? We are studying a subject and will focus only on that. So, **मनसो ह्यमनीभावे द्वैतं नैवोपलभ्यते** -

Whenever mind becomes no-mind, there is no multiplicity. And they use two examples.One is of deep sleep and the state of unconsciousness and we are adding a third - the state of Samadhi, where one has worked extremely hard to reach a state where there is a complete cessation of mindwaves. And this has been experienced by many sages. That is the goal of life. In all these three cases we find that the mind stops working. The moment the mind stops working , it means we don't have remembrance. The consequence is that multiplicity ceases to act. It is time to be doubtful of the idea of multiplicity.

So what is the practical use of it? Nowadays we like to know what is the practical use. It has extreme practical use. Whenever you are assailed by very powerful emotions and when you have very powerful disturbances, whether good or bad, if you can bring in this philosophy, see everything as unified, the person who is hurting me is none other than me myself. Because there is complete unification. And the person who is giving me extreme joy, the person to whom I am feeling grateful,and ready to do anything for that person, that person is also only me.

One day I was talking to one of my brother monks. He is an extremely scholarly person - Swami Dhyanagamyananda. He gives talks on Brihadaranyaka Upanishad and is a very learned person. He is an extremely scholarly person and he is a PhD in computer science. He was discussing Bhakti. And we were discussing obstacles in Bhakti and steps in Bhakti. How a devotee progresses and how he feels that he is progressing. He said, Swamiji, isn't it so funny that every kind of progress that we make in Karma Yog, or in Raj Yog or in Jnana

Yog, or Bhakti Yog, whatever it be ultimately it is all because of Advaita only. The idea that there is multiplicity, there is God, and I am moving towards God, like people say oh it was all destined, people say it was all God's will, what do we mean by God's will? Do you mean to say that God is somebody sitting up and controlling Kings, and planning things for you? Actually you alone exist. Who is there to control your destiny ?No law of Karma world on you. How can the law of Karma work on you? You are the master of all Karma.

Once I had met one astrologer, and he was good. So I just showed him my palm just out of curiosity. And he very seriously told me Swamiji, this palmistry and horoscope etc, do not work in the case of monks. I was very young. I asked how? He said look, anyone who has given up the world, anyone who has become a monk, he is now kind of connected with God, and God is the master of all these planets. As far as normal people are concerned, normal people , even high grade devotees, for them planets are highly effective. But for monks they may be effective and they may not be effective. So it becomes extremely unpredictable. Because ordinary people remain captive and are controlled by various forces. But those who are trying to feel their identity with God, who can control them? It is complete oneness. Whether you attain that oneness through Bhakti or you attain that through Vedanta it does not matter. It is ultimately about oneness. So how do you reach that state of no-mind? How about destruction of multiplicity ? How do you reach that? Verse 32 says that.

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आत्मसत्यानुबोधेन न संकल्पयते यदा ।

अमनस्तां तदा याति ग्राह्याभावे तदग्रहम् ॥ Karika 32॥

When the mind does not imagine on account of the knowledge of the Truth which is Atman, then it ceases to be mind and becomes free from all idea of cognition, for want of objects to be cognised.

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When the mind realises the knowledge that Atman alone is real it is free from imaginations, i.e. multiplicity, then the mind cannot cognise anything. For want of objects to be cognised it ceases to be the mind.

When one reaches the state of Samadhi, realises Advaita (for example Shankaracharya, Sri Ramakrishna, and many other sages) one realises that there is only pure consciousness. What exactly happens in that pure consciousness. When you reach that pure state of consciousness, you realise that subject, object and the action, the verb, their multiplicity ceases. Now what is multiplicity? There is the subject, here is me, and here is this pen And I am looking at this pen. So three things are involved, subject, object and verb. But when you have self knowledge, when you realise self all these three become pure consciousness. This triad ceases to exist. Now the subject is Atman, object also is Atman, what will that person crave for? When Sri Ramakrishna, reaches that state where he realises that Atman alone exists. Nothing else is there other than Atman. Now the food that he is taking is also Atman. How can you eat? Swami Vivekananda, then Narendranath Datta, once was making fun of

Sri Ramakrishna, with someone, ridiculing the ideas of Advaita. When Sri Ramakrishna heard this, he just touched him. When he touched him, Narendranath went to that state where he saw everything was conscious. When he returned home, he could not eat. He was seeing the food as consciousness. There is a lake at Hedua, North Kolkata where is Swamiji's ancestral house. And there are iron railings. He went and banged his head against those railings to see whether or not the railings existed. Because he was seeing them as pure consciousness. He had a head injury and still he could feel that it was conscious. This is what happens with persons who reach the state of non-dual.

When they are teaching, they very well know that the person whom they are teaching is Brahman, Atman. And the process of teaching is also Atman. The ultimate goal is Atman. How is it effective for us? How is it useful for us? Well we can always practice it. Most of the things that we discuss here I learnt from Srimad Swami Mokshadanandaji Maharaj. He used to be my Acharya, teacher at the training centre at Belur Math. Every young monk, every novice has to stay at Belur Math and take training there for two years in the early days. He was my Acharya and I bonded with him and for the next 25 years I used to come to him regularly. And whenever I came, I used to spend one or two hours with him.And then there was time when I was at Belur Math for a very long period and I used to spend 3-4 hours with him. And he had told me exactly this that if you start practicing Advaita, just by reading these books, you try to feel that oneness, and if your life really goes to that state where it is pure consciousness, that means there is no one whom you want to grab and there is no one whom you want to reject. For all practical purposes you are now a Brahmajnani. You have reached that state of Jnan. Vijnana remains.

What is meant by Vijnan? When you really see it. Somebody has written Vijnan-Vedanta, utter nonsense. Jnan, Vijnan, it is a very old thing for us Hindus. And what is that? Jnan is when you theoretically know it and practice it, even practice it fully. However, you do not know it, you have not realised it, you have visualised, you have practised it, but not yet realised. There have been cases when someone who was extremely good at theory but may not have seen the thing. For example, a very good student of physics, who knows everything about the atomic bomb, even the practical aspect, without ever having seen any of those instruments. It happens. Sometimes if you are fascinated by the Himalayas, say you might study a lot about the Himalayas, so thoroughly that you know everything about the Himalayas. But you have never been to that place. When you go there, you say Oh! exactly as I read. Atmajnan, Self Knowledge, Advaita is something like that. Theoretically you know it, you practice it in your daily life. Someday you realise it and then you will find that what you were doing as a matter of practice that is the reality. I grew up in a village and people there were extremely religious. When I look back at their practices, I find that they were doing things according to the way Hindu scriptures ;prescribe .They did not know of those things.

They were doing it mechanically. And that is how they were holding on to their religion, and carrying on the practices. When I started studying the scriptures, I said oh my God, these things are coming from the historical past. अग्निमीळे पुरोहितं यज्ञस्य देवम् ऋत्विजं होतारं रत्न धातमम् Agnimeele Purohitam (agnimīḻe purohitaṁ yajñasya devam ṛtvijaṁ hotāraṁ ratna dhātamam is the first mantra of the Rig Veda. It is part of the Agni Suktam) and the practice of putting something cooked in the fire. The fire, highest respect as divine being, as God. In those days I did not know that our Vedas begin with Agnimelle Purohitam, worship of Agni. It is the same with Advaita. Absolutely the same. You may not realise it but can practice. Some day, realisation may come. It is the same with people who practice Bhakti.

When a great saint realises that God has become everything, he says certain things and we ordinary people listen to these greats. Acharya Shankar very beautifully said practices of the spiritually perfect when done consciously with labour is Sadhana. Sri Ramakrishna, Swami Vivekananda, Shankaracharya or any of the great Advaitins, did certain things naturally because they saw like that. You might have seen kids trying to act like their parents. They try to talk and walk like their parents. They like to sit, they like to pose, just like that. Spiritual practices are similar. You read the biography of Sri Ramakrishna, read the biography of Shankaracharya or the biography of anybody whom you respect and then you try to put yourself in that mould. Someday when you realise the ultimate truth nothing new comes to your life.

Here there is one word of caution. Many of those who are into spiritual life, some of you might be you think that realisation is some kind of sudden conversion. The idea of sudden conversion implies that you are living one kind of life and you are doing maybe some meditation, some Japam, some worship, and one fine day you will suddenly have a vision of God. You will have some vision of God, and your life will change forever. No, it does not work like that . It might have happened with one or two persons but that is not the rule. What happens is you accept the truth of whatever you want to,say for example you want to be an Advaitin you take up the reality of Advaita and start practicing it. Those of you who have read about how crystallisation takes place, might know that there is a saturated solution , there is a supersaturated solution and finally a crystal comes from outside and the formation of crystal starts. Spiritual realisation happens like this. For nearly every spiritual practitioner, though there are one or two exceptions. But they are exceptions. They are the masters. If you are serious about spiritual life, first you decide what kind of realisation you want. Do you want Advaita or do you want Bhakti? Fine, you want Bhakti, let us say, you want to feel that Krishna has become everything, and you treat the world accordingly. Krishna alone has become everything and you become fully established in it. Anyone who is committing some kind of mischief, you say he is naughty Krishna. We have such a description in Bhagavat,

where Krishna is acting naughty. And his mother Yoshoda punishes him, ties him with rope, These things will happen. But mind it, when the final realisation comes, it is just vetting of the practices that you have been doing.

आत्मसत्यानुबोधेन न संकल्पयते यदा । अमनस्तां तदा याति ग्राह्याभावे तदग्रहम् ॥

When you see everything as Atman, what is there to grab and what is there to give up? Nothing. Whenever there is cognition, when we talk about cognition, experiencing something there has to be duality. Now you have reached the state of non-duality, how can there be any kind of cognition? Experiencing something there has to be duality. When there is no cognition there is no mind. Object itself being Atman nothing is left to be done. This is the state of A-Mani. No mind. Now the term, the full term here is **आत्मसत्यानुबोधेन** Atmasatya anubodhena - when the mind realises the truth regarding Atman, regarding self.

Acharya Shankar beautifully says that, what these scriptures have said, what your teachers have said, we have been brought up in the tradition of Advaita, and finally you realise by yourself through Shruti, Yukti and Anubhuti - three things, what you read in scriptures, what you have reasoned it with your teacher, and what you realise it yourself. The three conditions of truth, Shruti, Yukti, Anubhuti.

When the teacher teaches, he does not impose some truth on you. He tells a statement and then there is a conversation and because in that conversation you can object but that objection is for the purpose of learning. Not for contradicting the teacher. Slowly your mind gets established, it gets fully established in the truth. You start practicing that kind of life. When we say that he is a religious person, it means that the spiritual truths have been imbibed by him and he is now leading the life accordingly. Now some people from the younger generation who have no mooring say “I am spiritual, I am not religious”. My God what a statement! Sri Ramakrishna was like that, He was spiritual, he was not religious because, he had transcended that state of spiritual practices. My God! These teenagers have reached the state of Sri Ramakrishna and Jesus Christ. They don't even understand what they say.

I met one lady.she was pretty learned and she said oh Swamiji I am spiritual but not religious. I said My God , then I will have to fall flat at your feet, because this is the state of greatest of the masters. When the spiritual truth is practised in daily life you become a religious person. But when spirituality dawns upon you and you finally see everything as God, what kind of rituals will you follow? No you don't have to. Most of us have some weakness. When we were young kids we had love for sugar candies, love for chocolates and those shopkeepers were so mischievous that they would keep those candies etc in the font and when we passed through that street our eyes would always fall on that. And we would be so tempted and we always thought only if we had some money we would purchase

that. Just like that all of us have some kind of weakness. Purchasing books, music, painting etc. I mean in the sense acquiring, ornaments, cars, whatever. If you have those kinds of desires, desire to go somewhere etc. And suppose you become master of all those things, you are now rich enough to purchase any kind of ornament. Initially you had desire, now you acquire them and now your house is full of ornaments. You have a huge storehouse of ornaments. And you have a fleet of cars. Will you be desiring anything anymore? No you will not. You already have it, Same thing happens, absolutely the same thing happens when you are established in the Advaita. Everything is Brahman. And because everything is Brahman, what will you want to aspire to have for yourself. Nothing. The mind has now ceased to exist. This is the state of no mind So the state of no-mind is reached only through knowledge - the knowledge of Atman,self knowledge. How to get it?

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अकल्पकमजं ज्ञानं ज्ञेयाभिन्नं प्रचक्षते ।

ब्रह्मज्ञेयमजं नित्यमजेनाजं विबुध्यते ॥ Karika 33II

The knowledge (Jnanam) which is unborn and free from all imaginations is ever inseparable from the knowable, The immutable and birthless Brahman is the sole object of knowledge. The birthless is known by the birthless.

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This idea we had mentioned earlier. Knowledge that is Brahman is unborn, is free from imagination, any kind of duality, is described by the wise as ever inseparable from the knowable. Immutable and birthless Brahman is the goal of knowledge. birthless is known by the birthless.

Knowledge or rather the term is cognition, when I perceive something, I am looking at this microphone. This is cognition. When I know this, we call it knowledge. But this kind of worldly knowledge involves the duality of subject and object and this process of knowing. But knowing Brahman is not that kind of knowledge. Very often people talk about Ishwar Jnan, Ishwar Darshan. People talk about Brahmajnan. Brahmadarshan. No it is not that you are something and Brahman is something and you see Brahman. It is not that you are something, Brahman is something and you get the knowledge of Brahman, It is not like that. Then what is it? Knowledge and Brahman are the same thing. Because if these were not true, then it will be implied that there is knowledge which is reaching Brahman and covering it. But every kind of knowledge, process of knowledge coming from mind is extremely small compared to huge Brahman. It cannot grasp. Sri Ramakrishna put it very simply: if you have a pot of one litre you cannot put 3 litres of milk into it. Brahman is infinite, mind is finite. So every time the term Brahmajnan or Jnan is used, normally when scriptures talk about Jnan, they mean knowledge of Brahman. So, Jnan, Brahmajnan and Brahma are the same. Whether you say knowledge or you say knowledge of Brahman, or you say Brahman, these three are one and the same. And that Brahman is unborn. Knowledge is unborn. What is the

state of Brahman is the state of knowledge. If knowledge were not Brahman, in that case it will be something like trying to see light within darkness. The mind is limited, knowledge itself, knowledge of the world belongs to mind, and some kind of Ajnan only. Some kind of ignorance. It is as if you are trying to see knowledge with some kind of ignorance, you are trying to look at light with the help of darkness. Can you see light with the help of darkness? No you cannot. Nor can you see darkness with light. That is why we cannot know Maya. Neither Brahman can be known nor Maya can be known. This is a very interesting thing. Because Maya does not exist and knowledge itself is Brahman. So, Brahman has the quality that it is never born nor does it die. Nor does it have any kind of qualification, nor does it have any kind of quality, nor does it undergo any kind of transformation. One who knows Brahman, knows that doer and the deed itself and the result are one. Ramana Maharshi, he knew Brahman. So when they teach with the full knowledge that the doer and the deed itself and the result all these are one, that is Brahman. This is the takeaway from this discussion. Whenever we are talking about no-mind, it can be attained only in the state of Brahma Jnana. What is the state of Brahma Jnana? Brahma Jnana is when you realise Brahman. That is why the term often used is realisation. Realisation is when one knows that Jnan and Brahma are one and the same. So as Brahman is unborn, knowledge is unborn. And when you know the birthless that is Brahman with the birthless which is Jnan, **ब्रह्मज्ञेयमजं नित्यमजेनाजं विबुध्यते** - Ajena ajamam Bibudhyate. The birthless is known by the birthless,

Mind is born, mind grows, we have been acquiring knowledge, and so mind improves everyday. Thus the mind undergoes transformation. It had a birth, it will die, so it belongs to a different class. In this kind of knowledge, inter-caste marriage is not permitted. In our society we permit it. Not theirs. Brahman belongs to a different class. What is that? Unborn. If you have to know it, you have to know through the knowledge which is unborn.It is phenomenal. It is difficult to grasp.

The mind, the working of mind, the process of knowledge is that the world through mind is born. We did not have knowledge of something, then that knowledge came, so knowledge is born. But here spiritual knowledge, knowledge of Brahman, is unborn ever. Jnata (knower), Jneya (the object of learning), Jnan (Knowledge) are all one. There are no two, so how can you have a knower? There are no two, so how can there be the process of knowing? Not only this, the great ones who preach, sayRaman Maharshi, when he was preaching, he knew very well that the person who is listening is also Brahman. The act of preaching is Brahman. The act of Preaching is Brahman. The act also is Brahman. Brahmarpanam Brahma Havir Brahmagnau Brahmanahutaṃ, Brahmaiva Tena Gantavyam Brahmakarma Samadhinah - as mentioned in the 4th chapter of Geeta, also means everything is Brahman. It is so difficult to grasp and nevertheless, this is the truth. And the result Brahmaiva Tena

Gantavyam – is also Brahman. The doer is Brahman, the object is Brahman, the act is Brahman and the result is Brahman. Since this knowledge is always manifest and self-evident it does not require any other kind of knowledge. For example we have the Sun. When the Sun comes out it does not require any other kind of light. It is so luminous, self luminous. Similarly Brahmajnan is self-luminous, it does not require any other method of knowledge and hence it does not require any other instrument of knowledge. And hence the mind is an obstruction. Forget about that mind is not needed. Mind is an obstruction.

38. Why we need Samadhi

We already discussed in verse 33, that the knower and the known and the knowledge all three become one.

Hindu religion, particularly Vedanta, is not a simplistic religion; Vedanta is not a simplistic philosophy. Vedanta is an intuitive philosophy. Various questions can arise in mind.It requires contemplation. If you go deep into contemplation, answers will bloom before you. Therefore this subject calls for rereading and contemplation.

One of the very difficult concepts, I use the word concept, because for us it is a concept. But for the greats it is a reality. When you go deeper into spirituality, deeper into contemplation, still your mind, whatever path you take, whether you take the path of Bhakti, or you take the path of Jnana, that is Vedanta, you realise that the object of your worship and the act and you, these three have become one.

Your object, that is Brahman, and the knowledge of Brahman, these are one and the same thing. This was explained in the verse 33 - **अकल्पकमजं ज्ञानं ज्ञेयाभिन्नं प्रचक्षते । ब्रह्मज्ञेयमजं नित्यमजेनाजं विबुध्यते ॥ Karika 33II**. Jnana and Jneya–the object of knowledge and the process of knowledge– they become one. Sri Ramakrishna jas talked about this. You will find this in the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna.

Now this is a very difficult thing. When the mind becomes absolutely still during meditation, one finds that the process of meditation, the object of meditation all become one. This stilling the mind is known as Citta-Vritti-Nirodha which is cessation of all mental modification. And while discussing that, while explaining that this verse, it was explained how darkness can never reveal light. Knowledge, as we understand, is a product of mind, and so can never reveal Brahman. Well it was explained in detail.

Now we will take up verse no 34. Why Samadhi? Do we need Samadhi? Interesting topic. Before we get to this verse we need to understand one or two points very clearly.

First is that Mukti - liberation is not an indirect product. For example, think of your happiness, think of joy. Happiness is a better word because we often use the word joy for realisation. So let us call it happiness. Suppose you love eating something. Or you love going to some place or you love talking to somebody, meeting with somebody. When that purpose is attained, you eat something, you go somewhere, you talk to someone, meet someone, the result is happiness. So there is a cause and effect relationship. You are interested in the effect. Which is happiness. But happiness is caused indirectly. But knowledge is not something like that. Knowledge is not an indirect product of something. So there is no cause and effect relationship.

Atmajnana –self realisation, it is not only self realisation, it is God realisation too. And it is true for Bhakti too. Those who practise Bhakti of any religion, in each of these cases, the fact remains the same. What ? The result is not a product of some other act. The act and the result are one and the same. This is a very beautiful expression in Sanskrit for this. It comes in Narada Bhakti Sutra. It is फलरुपत्वात् - phalarūpattvāt. The action and the result are one and the same. You love God, the result is love of God. you practice Jnana, that is you practice universality, You practice oneness and the result is oneness. So the result is not something indirect. Now, it is not even associated with ideas like heaven and all as we had in some of our older philosophies and still practiced in other religions. What does it mean? Simply means that there cannot be the intervention of mind. And the technical term for that is Amani - अमानी, that is no mind, which we have already discussed.

What exactly happens with the mind? That we have discussed in Raja Yog. We really do not know what exactly the mind is. But we know about its function. Sometimes it so happens that you know the science of it, but you do not know what is happening. Humans have been doing agriculture for thousands of years. The technology was known, but science behind it was discovered much later. . In the case of the Atomic bomb, science came earlier, technology came later. In the case of mind we know the techniques; Raja Yog has given every technique, everything about the mind. But we don't yet understand the science of it. Maybe someday it will become clear. Whenever there is slightest activity of the mind, it is known as Vritti. That is the technical term. With slightest of activity and the duality enters. Duality is opposed to unification, obviously. Brahman is one. Duality is two. I-ness enters. So if there is even the slightest of activity of mind, you will fall down from the state of Brahma Jnana. But of course if you attain knowledge once, then that never goes away. But here we are discussing the case of us mortals.

Once the mind stops taking in the external world, the objects of the external world, it becomes dead. Apparently. How? Acharya Shankar beautifully says it is like the fire to which

fuel is stopped. Once the supply of fuel is cut off, fire goes out. Similarly the mind goes off and does not exist anymore. Mind stops working. Maybe the mind has gone into an altered state of consciousness.

But that does not happen when we are in deep sleep. Probably something like that happens, when somebody smokes marijuana or takes some drugs. When I was a young monk, I remember somebody who was saying that look you people talk about spiritual realisations, you talk about visions, but that is exactly what happens when you have drugs like LSD. When you use certain kinds of drugs you start hallucinating. It is said Monks in earlier times used to take ganja, bhang etc. And the kind of hallucinations that were produced by those drugs, which they thought that they were having visions or something like that. I was asked how your meditation is different from these? Or how is mediation different from self-hypnosis, auto-suggestion. I was young then and I did not have any answer. Well I used to mumble something, something about character, greatness of character etc. It was only later, when I studied these things that ideas became clear about the distinction between deep sleep and Samadhi.

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निगृहीतस्य मनसो निर्विकल्पस्य धीमतः ।

प्रचारः स तु विज्ञेयः सुषुप्तेऽन्यो न तत्समः ॥ Karika 34॥

The behaviour of the mind that is under control, i.e., which is free from all imaginations and that is endowed with discrimination, should be known. The condition of the mind in deep sleep is of another sort and not like that.

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What is the difference between deep sleep and samadhi? One should know the behaviour of the mind which is under control and endowed with discrimination and free from illusions. Samadhi means to have your mind completely under control. The condition of the mind in deep sleep is not like that, but is of a different kind.

In case of auto -suggestions, self-hypnosis, drugs, unconsciousness, deep sleep, the mind is not under control. I was having some discussion with a friend long ago where we discussed which is worse? Drinking or smoking. That gentleman was focussing on smoking. I said drinking is extremely bad. You lose control over your mind. The only asset that you have. I keep telling that time and tranquility are my two assets. Once I die, say I go to some other loka, the sense of time will change for me. It is said in our scriptures and it is logical. When you go to a different sphere of existence, the scale of time changes for you. But my mind will not change. You are mind. You and your mind are the same. How can you let go of your only asset that you have? No you cannot. So drinking and drugs are absolute taboo for people who are aspiring to be devotees, who are aspiring for Jnana, who are aspiring for realisation. Because they need to keep their mind under control all the time. So, **निगृहीतस्य** - to broaden

the control and **निगृहीतस्य मनसो निर्विकल्पस्य धीमतः** - there are two terms starting with Ni - नि, which means "not". Nigrihitasya implies complete control.

There is a very powerful horse. You want to keep it under control. You drug it. Of what use is that horse now? Or if you terrify that horse into submission, of what use is that horse? Nothing. It becomes Useless. If you dull your mind, with the help of drugs, auto-suggestion, self-hypnosis, what remains of you?

Recently I went out and I met one lady. She was talking to me about curing certain things through hypnosis. She asked for my opinion on this. I strongly objected to it. I said you cannot. Under no condition one should be taking control of the mind of others. I am not sure if she liked what I said. But I must tell the truth. Neither should you allow anyone to take control of your mind nor should you ever go to control the mind of others. This is sin. There is a powerful fiery horse. Train him. Give it more power. But never dull it.

So what is happening during deep sleep is that you are just allowing the horse to go to sleep and when you take drinks or drugs you are drugging the horse. It is of no use. Instead try to control the horse, Like Alexander controlled his horse, Bucephalus. You should control a machine but allow it to run wild. Only then it is of use. Control a machine. It should not be allowed to go wild. Nor should you shut it down. Machine is used only till it is working as a machine.

I had developed a concept known as info-energy – Energy+information. Information is that thing which is put inside a machine or in any system that regulates it. If the level of information is less, info-energy is less. Because info-energy is less it acts wild. A thing that goes wild is of no use. Its utility decreases. So, says Nirviklapla - does not let his mind go here and there. Vedanta is meant for dhiman - one who is intelligent. Vedanta is not meant for everyone. Vedanta is meant for intelligent people. Only if your mind is very very sharp, then you can understand Vedanta. It is not meant for all. After reading one or two verses, many will say it's extremely terrifying. People cannot take it. People who aspire to be Yogis, are very sharp, very intelligent. They should try to know this affair of the mind diligently, intelligently in depth.

In deep sleep what is happening is that the seed of ignorance – Avidya, which is the root cause of the universe, which is the root cause of me, you and everything, which is the root cause of duality , which is the root cause of the troubles, the seed remains intact. The moment you start coming out of deep sleep that seed sprouts. It is a wonder. Those who have some interest in reading "Asterix and Obelix" know that in one of the stories "Mansions of God" , there is a druid who puts magic seeds, puts in some magic potion and trees sprout instantly. Obelix was surprised as he had never seen it. Here our mind is sprouting this world everyday. Every time you go into deep sleep and once you are coming out of it, your whole

universe, your world sprouts. Instantly. Faster than the trees that were growing in that Asterix and Obelix story. Because the seed is there and these seeds are extremely potent. Instantly the entire universe grows! Imagine! When you go into deep sleep., the whole thing vanishes as if nothing is there. You can be carried from one seat to another and you don't know. Anything may happen to you and you won't know. Yet the moment you start coming out of deep sleep, the universe blooms and erupts. Isn't this amazing? What a mystery! What magic! No magician can create such a big magic. And we are creating it everyday. Everyday we are creating this universe and we are dissolving this universe.

But that is not what we want, that is not our goal. We want the ultimate dissolution of this universe. Sushupti cannot provide us that, neither drugs, nor drinks. Nor unconsciousness, and definitely not deep sleep. The delusion of duality continues.

That is why we need Samadhi. The destruction of that seed, the seed from which sprouts the whole universe, universe that we perceive in our dream state, the universe that we perceive in our waking state, the seed that remains hidden as Avidya state, just in seed form when we are asleep, when we are unconscious, when we are drugged. We have discussed this in Raja Yog talks. We have discussed how we have different kinds of mind, five different kinds of mind. The Yogis, that is me, you and any one who is listening and anyone who is interested in these things has to try for complete cessation of mind. By complete cessation of mind we mean that the seed of ignorance, seed of Avidya, Prakriti has to be destroyed. The seed has to become a fried seed. Fried seeds do not germinate. They do not sprout into trees any more. So we need to acquire that knowledge. Only by acquiring the knowledge of the universal, only acquiring the knowledge of oneness, can we aspire to destroy the seed of ignorance. Theoretically speaking.

If you have to compare deep sleep–Sushupti, best it can be compared with is death. When one dies, nothing changes,it is just invisible. The moment the opportune moment comes , one becomes visible again. In Sushupti, one goes into a particular stupor and once one comes out the whole thing is back again. But death cannot lead to immortality. Death can only take only to different spheres. But if one has acquired knowledge, if one knows the truth, then it is a different matter. Otherwise no at all. And why samadhi? Why should we aspire for samadhi? Sometime some of you must have faced this question, from near and dear ones. Why should we go for Spirituality. It is answered now in verse no 35.

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लीयते हि सुषुप्ते तन्निगृहीतं न लीयते ।

तदेव निर्भयं ब्रह्म ज्ञानालोकं समन्ततः ॥ Karika 35॥

As the mind is withdrawn at the time of deep sleep and not so in the case of the (Vedantic) discipline, (therefore there is a difference between the condition of the mind of a sleeper and that of a Jnani). That (mind of a Jnani) becomes identical with fearless Brahman whose all-round illumination is consciousness alone.

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This is a very beautiful verse. It explains why we need spirituality. Not only spirituality, it is not ordinary spirituality, where you worship God, where you want to devote yourself to God, where you plan to go to heaven, by doing this and doing that, that includes killing people. We don't believe in all that.

We believe in **लीयते हि सुषुप्ते तन्निगृहीतं न लीयते** - the mind is withdrawn in deep sleep, as we explained. Like it becomes seed. But it is not so when the mind is controlled. The mind is ultimately controlled. It is not like withdrawing it. The controlled mind is verily the fearless Brahman. **तदेव निर्भयं ब्रह्म ज्ञानालोकं समन्ततः** - those of you who are really interested in the subject you should mark this **तदेव निर्भयं ब्रह्म** - the controlled mind is mind that has ceased to function, Verily it is one with Brahman. Active mind is the world, the still mind is Brahman. Such a simple thing.

This can be terrifying. We see this world, simply because our mind is active. When we go into the state of losing consciousness, the mind is in a seed state. Activities of mind are in a seed state. When we go into deep sleep, the same thing happens. When you go to any other state, the same thing happens. But once you can succeed in silencing the vrittis forever, the mind becomes one with Brahman. In Kathopanishad there is a beautiful mantra. When you take a drop of pure water and put it in a body of water, what happens? It becomes one. The problem is that when we think of water, we are actually talking about particles. Even if we take an ocean of light and put a photon in, we are talking of matter and that is why these ideas do not become clear. When the mind reaches the state of non-activity, it is like that the whole thing has become one with Brahman, one with consciousness. Consciousness, when living in its own majesty, it is consciousness, is Brahman. When consciousness appears as mind, activity is now of a different kind. World comes. That is why we are Brahman all the time. We are also Jiva all the time. Why? A functioning mind is Jiva, silenced mind, stilled mind is Brahman. There is no difference.

I find it frightening. I don't know if you find it frightening. It is frightening. It is too massive, huge. All the time we are the universal, all the time I am pure existence, pure consciousness, simply because that consciousness is imagining itself to be the mind, mind means activity, because it is active so we have these three states: waking, dream and deep sleep. And this universe is there. Amazing. And that state of Samadhi can be attained in a moment. How? Still your mind. Complete. And you realise you are Brahman. What kind of Brahman? Nirbhayam Brahma. Fearless Brahman. There is absolutely no fear of any kind. What is fear? Fear comes whenever you think of two.

There is a very beautiful description in Upanishad. That when the creation became a story, there was God, it got scared, then there was thought. Why should I be scared? Because

there are two. In upanishads we come across this many times. Wherever there is duality there is fear. Fear always means duality. Now you can overcome the fear. Like when we were young kids, we were scared of Ghosts. As we grow, we are not that scared. We were scared of the dark. We are not scared of darkness now. Things like that. In fact we love darkness, we love meditating in darkness and we love being ourselves. But when we were kids we were scared of darkness. You outgrow certain fears. We were scared of this, we were scared of that. We have overcome all that. And yet new fears have come. When you were a kid you were never scared of not having wealth, not having money. But now, you are, most of us are. Now you are scared of Governments. Now you are scared of this and scared of that. These fears were not there when you were a kid. So certain fears go away and new fears come. As you grow further, certain fears will go away and new fears will come. So, the game of fear and outgrowing fear will continue forever, till eternity. It will go on. It is a never ending thing. But it will end if you can reach that state of unification, the state of universality. The state of Brahman. Brahman and Brahmajnana are one and the same. Brahman and Brahmjnana, knowledge of Brahma, are not two different things as we explained in the beginning. Once you reach that state you become completely fearless. How to reach that? There is no way of reaching that state unless you go into Samadhi. Why samadhi? You need samadhi because you need knowledge of Brahman. Because in that knowledge lies the cessation of all the troubles that we have. The sorrow that we have, the fear that we have. Like people are scared to lose their dear ones. We are scared of losing our life. We are scared of losing our limbs. Particularly the dear ones, people you love, you don't want to lose them. But why are you scared? Because you see duality. If you can somehow reach that state of non-duality, where you say that everything is one, then all these things will go away. Most importantly, every emotion will be gone forever. Instead of emotions, now you are full of knowledge. Emotions oppose knowledge.

A friend of mine is a very big publisher. At least he used to be a very big publisher. So, he was narrating that in his prime time, he was a publisher of computer books, he published more that 15000 titles. And said that whenever an author wrote a book and came to him to get published, the author would say I am the last word on this subject. I found it so funny. Because whenever I write, I also feel the same, this is the last word. And he said, the author always feels that he is going to shake the market. But nothing happens. I am realising that now. Nobody purchases and reads. Within a year a new book comes on the same topic. Then he used this expression beautifully. He said when a person writes he is so passionate about it. We get emotional about it. Emotion is the eternal enemy of knowledge. Our life runs on emotions. Our life does not run on knowledge. We don't even apply theoretical knowledge, forget about the actual knowledge. Even If we apply theoretical knowledge, our pains would reduce. My friend was telling me that only when the book is published, the

authors get a reality check. Reality check, that is knowledge. Until then he is passionate. He thinks he is going to shake the market. Nothing happens. Knowledge kills emotions. If you want to kill emotion, if you are suffering, if you tend to get hyper, if you tend to get depressed, if you tend to go low, If you tend to feel jealous, if you feel too full of birth, then have the right knowledge. Emotions will go away. Fear is our worst enemy. It can go away only when you know Brahman. You know that you are one with the universal. **ज्ञानालोकं समन्ततः** - Because then you realise that everywhere is only that Brahman, everywhere there is only pure consciousness. So, everywhere there is the light of his omniscience, everywhere there is that pure consciousness. You cannot have any emotions. No way. Do you want to get rid of your fears? Real or imagined? Do you want to get rid of your sorrows? Real or imagined. You need to have knowledge. That is how we keep on outgrowing our fears. That was a rather long discussion. Those with no exposure to the topic can have problems grasping these points. Best is to reread and listen to our channel Indian Spiritual heritage.

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अजमनिद्रमस्वप्नमनामकमरूपकम् ।

सकृद्विभातं सर्वज्ञं नोपचारः कथंचन ॥ Karika 36॥

(This Brahman is) birthless, free from sleep, and dream, without name and form, ever-effulgent, and omniscient. Nothing has to be done in any way (with respect to Brahman).

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Here Brahman is being described. Pure consciousness is being described. Brahman, consciousness, ultimate knowledge, is birthless. It is not that it has been born. It is anidram, it is not the dream state, and it is not even deep sleep, sushupti, - **अजमनिद्रमस्वप्नम** - it is nameless, it cannot be named, it is beyond any form, all the forms exist in it. It is ever effulgent.

अजमनिद्रमस्वप्नमनामकमरूपकम् - you cannot name it. Because naming means distinguishing from something. It has no form, because form means that it distinguishes it from other forms. It is the ultimate repository of everything. All the forms exist in it.

सकृद्विभातं सर्वज्ञं - ever-effulgent, and sarvjnam - it is pure consciousness, it knows everything. Dear listeners, isn't it terrifying that I am Brahman, I am omniscient, I know everything. Simply because I have allowed my consciousness to become the mind and the mind is active, so I am getting the universe. And my knowledge becomes limited. My form becomes limited, my name becomes limited. I become a limited being. All because I have chosen to be so; it is so terrifying.

One of my brother monks; he was a young and intelligent person. He said very seriously, Oh! How I wish all these things of religion were false. He said, neither am I able to attain the

heights of spirituality, nor am I able to jump into this world of enjoyment. He was very young those days. I found his words extremely impressive. Said if somehow somebody can convince me that spirituality is all false, all these scriptures are false I would just plunge into every kind of enjoyment. I will kind of tear this world apart. I loved his enthusiasm. I loved action and he meant it. He was not one of those big talkers. He meant it. That if only somehow, I could convince myself, or somebody could convince me that all these Atman, Brahman , God these are all false and Imagined things, I will plunge into the world. Squeeze it out. But that is the unfortunate part, he used to say.

Whenever I am contemplating this, it makes me so terrified, makes me so upset, so distraught.I am unborn, I don't have any form because I am infinite. Only finite things have form, infinite cannot have form. Full of light, and I am omniscient, sarvajna, I know everything, and I know the past, I know the future, I know the present!

Once you know that - **नोपचारः कथंचन** - this last thing, you cannot have any kind of upachar, you cannot have any kind of duty, you cannot have any kind of responsibility. You are completely beyond any responsibility. Gita has put it very beautifully in Karmayog. नैव तस्य कृतेनार्थो नाकृतेनेह कश्चन |न चास्य सर्वभूतेषु कश्चिदर्थव्यपाश्रय:ll (3.18) (Such self-realized souls have nothing to gain or lose either in discharging or renouncing their duties. Nor do they need to depend on other living beings to fulfill their self-interest.)

Nopachar kathanchan - you cannot have any duty. How can you have duty? Duty is when you feel that there is a second one. When you feel connected with somebody. There are no two. Put it differently, anyone who has any sense of duty is not yet a Jnani.

This has become a very serious problem with India in fact. These scriptures are meant for very few.These are not meant for everybody, and when people who are not competent teachers, when they start talking these before the general public they in fact do harm. Given the option, I will never talk of these things to the public. The public is not ready for this. So, now India took up this idea and then started saying oh I don't have any duty, why should I do etc etc. That was the downfall of India. The downfall of India can be greatly credited to Vedanta. We have been discussing these things continuously. There is no creation it is telling. there is no purpose. AptakAmasya kA spriha? How can there be longing or craving in a sage in whom all desires are gratified or burnt by the fire of Self-knowledge? How can there be any purpose? It is just imagination. Once you meditate, once you reach that stage you will know that there is nothing, you are just imagining. It has no purpose. Why should there be any purpose? Even if you understand it theoretically, you will understand that you don't have any duty. You don't have a duty even towards yourself, forget about others. Because you don't have any purpose to fulfill. If everything is infinite, what purpose do you

have? But be cautioned, these things are not meant for ordinary minds. These are meant for great minds. I

I will give you one beautiful example. Long ago, must have happened 50/60 years ago, those of you who have visited Belur Math, would know that just opposite the temple there is a building you might have seen. Earlier that used to be the mission office. The office of the Headquarter of the Ramakrishna Mission. During Aarti time, it was the duty of one of the monks to sit there to answer any visitor or know if any work had come up. Some visitors had come from Gujarat or some other place. He saw one monk sitting there and said “look Arati is going on, why are you sitting here?" The monk said well, I am on duty to sit here. Those visitors were shocked. Surprised. How can a monk have any duty? How can Brahman have any duty? How can Brahman have any purpose?

You love to think that you have a purpose, that is why you are having duty. Once you know that you are Brhaman, Nitya, Shuddha, Bddha, mukta Swabhaba, eternal, nothing can contaminate you. You are Conscious all the time. Eternally free. Then why do you think that you are under bondage? Because you love to think. The way you pay to go watch tragic movies. And you know tragic movies are more famous than comedy movies. Greek tragedies are so famous. Even in Indian cinema, we have stars known as tragedy kings. Why would anyone pay to go to shed tears? There are enough tears in the society itself. Well these are mysteries of the universe that cannot be questioned. That cannot be rightly answered. You think, go deeper, you will find the answer.

Why do you need samadhi? Once you reach Samadhi, once we experience oneness, you will know that you don't have any duty. You realise that you don't have any emotion. You realise you are beyond any fear.

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सर्वाभिलापविगतः सर्वचिन्तासमुत्थितः ।

सुप्रशान्तः सकृज्ज्योतिः समाधिरचलोऽभयः ॥ Karika 37॥

(This Atman is) beyond all expression by words, beyond all acts of mind; (it is) all peace, eternal effulgence, free from activity and fear and attainable by concentrated understanding (of the Jiva)

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The ideas are being repeated in verse no 37. Atman is beyond all expression by words, beyond all acts of the mind. Neither can it be expressed nor can it be grasped. It is great peace, ultimate peace, eternal effulgence and Samadhi.

Samdhi comes from the word, Samahita (समाहित). Samahita means, to put. When you put the activities of the mind to something completely , and you reach that state where everything becomes unified. It is without any motion and it is fearless. Nirbhayay. It is beyond any fear. What is being said here is beyond the world, beyond mind. So, there is neither any kind of acceptance,

that is catching, nor there is any giving up. And that is why it is known as AsparshYog. Where there is no kind of contact, no kind of touching.

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One of the listeners (Debasis Das) talked of fear of social disgrace.

Yes. It is at times bigger than fear of death. It is so true. In fact Gita discusses this in second chapter when Lord Krishna cautions Arjuna, अकीर्तिं चापि भूतानि कथयिष्यन्ति तेऽव्ययाम् | सम्भावितस्य चाकीर्ति र्मरणादतिरिच्यते (2.34) (People will speak of you as a coward and a deserter. For a respectable person, infamy is worse than death.Sambhabitasya..marna dati richyate. A person who is established in self respect, a person who has fame, the loss of these is worse than death. You are absolutely correct. Social disgrace. Even the kids are extremely scared of social disgrace. KIds who are in class one or two, they are so scared if their teacher scolds her in the class in front of her classmates. You are absolutely correct. What is the fear of death? Nowadays we hear that some kids want a smartphone from their parents and they could not afford it. They did not get it. The teenager commits suicide, Because it is a social disgrace for that child. Very stupid. Extremely stupid. But the peer group in which he or she lives there not having a smartphone is a social disgrace.

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39. Asparsha Yog - The Yog of the untouched.

The previous talk was on Samadhi. Why we need Samadhi and what is the utility of Samadhi. Samadhi means to put into something - Samahita (समाहति, समाहित). When the activities of the mind are pushed and put into Atman, it is the state of Samadhi. Atman is like a great receptacle,where you push the mind and the mind loses its individuality.

We all very well know how the mind works in this world. It creates all the pain and all the pleasures that we have, all the irritations that we have, everything we have. Our insecurities, our fears, everything is rooted only in the mind. Now when this mind itself gets dissolved, or finds a taste of Brahman, every duality is gone. And because every duality is gone, verse no 37 says, all kinds of business, all kinds of activity are gone and absolute calm, absolute peace prevails. It is well lit, its synonym is Swayam jyoti - which means it is self lit and does not require any other kind of light, any other kind of knowledge. And it's a kind of samadhi, stillness etc. But if you have everything, it is Nirbhaya. Since there is no duality, there is no fear.

Mandukya Karika is something slightly abstruse and more than that it is sublime. Because of this, sometimes you may feel what use is this? Why do we need this? The thing is, even if

you can practice whatever has been said, even if you can practice oneness for maybe five minutes a day, when you can sit quietly, when no one is disturbing, whether you are in the office or at home or while travelling you will feel a calmness coming over you. Sit quietly and for those five minutes and just imagine that you are expanding and becoming one with the universe. Wherever you might be, whatever city you are, whether in India or abroad, just think that this world, this universe, everything is within you. The good, the bad and the ugly whatever is happening is within you. Your friends, your well wishers, your enemies, your detractors, they are all inside you. Suddenly you will feel a calmness coming over you. Dear listeners, try doing it. Practice it for five minutes. Those of you who are initiated disciples, initiative devotees of whatever tradition, you must be doing your Japa-dhyan, must be repeating the name of the Lord, must be doing some meditation. Since you are listening to these talks, I just request for five minutes. Whenever you remember, whenever it comes to your mind, just try to feel the oneness and you see the kind of calmness that comes over you. Suddenly you will be relaxed. This relaxation is not some kind of hypnotism, not some kind of auto-suggestion, But it comes from the slight glimpse of truth about you. Your truth is Atman, my truth is Atman, we suffer because we don't want to be associated with it. Children play imitating their father, try wearing his clothes, girls play with dolls and play mother, try to pose as their teachers, similarly just try to emulate who you have the greatest respect for. just try to feel Atman, universality in the same way, and see how you feel, the great feeling of oneness. You don't have hatred for anyone, don't have dislike for anyone, don't fear anyone, you only have love for all. You only have oneness for all.

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ग्रहो न तत्र नोत्सर्ग्रशिचन्ता यत्र न विद्यते ।

आत्मसंस्थं तदा ज्ञानमजाति समतां गतम् ॥ Karika 38॥

In that Brahman which is free from all acts of mind there is neither any idea of acceptance nor any idea of giving up (of anything). Established in the Atman (Self), knowledge attains to the state of birthlessness and sameness, that is to say changelessness.

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Brahman never gets born, nor does it undergo any kind of transformation. Very importantly it was mentioned earlier that Brahman and Brahmajnana are one and the same thing. The knowledge itself is Brahman. This has been discussed earlier. Once you get that knowledge, you realise Brahman, knowledge itself is Brahmana. There is that famous hymn in Rigveda, devi suktam, where there is a rishika, a female sage, Vak. And she realises her unity with Brahman, and what follows after that is just marvellous expression by somebody who has realised Brahman.

One big problem with all of us, everytime we talk about Atma Jnana, every time we think of Brahmajnana, everytime we talk about becoming one with Brahman we always think as if we are going to become something. You don't become something. The way a statue is carved

out of a stone, we think that you will become something. The foundation will be this, the outcome will be something different, but no. Nothing changes. Only the knowledge changes. Knowledge itself is Brahman.

These are subtle thoughts and by nature we are such that we can catch only the gross. We have problems understanding all this. Once we acquire that knowledge, once we get that Brahman, we are one with Brahman. There is nothing to give up and there is nothing to take up. People who practice Vedanta in the Neti Neti (not this not this) are giving up. Like we monks, we give up,we try to give up everything. In the last ritual that we perform, every monk, anyone who is a Vedantic monk, anyone who has grown up in the traditions of Vedanta, he has to perform a particular Homa, in front of the fire, which is famously known as Viraja Home. Vi-raja. Raja means dust. My personality has accumulated lots of dust from this world. That dust has to go away. How does it go away? You say that I am giving this up. I am giving this up, I am giving this up. I am giving this up. I am giving up everything.

In Christian traditions, when somebody becomes a Catholic father, he takes the vows of charity, poverty, obedience. A monk also takes the vows, but differently. Think of a Christian father, who takes the vows of leading a pure life, life of poverty.

A monk also is holding on to something and accepting something. He is accepting certain values. In the case of the Hindu monks, in the case of Vedantic monks, they do it differently. They give up. They say, here I give up the desire to acquire wealth. Because acquisition of wealth is something that has been superimposed on you. It is not your natural tendency. For those who consider the world to be real, for example those who practice Bhakti Marga, the path of devotion, as say in the path of Ramanuja, or Madhwacharya or in general for them, the world is real. When the world is real you take some vows. When we were young we used to make new year vows. Those used to be broken on the first day itself. When people get married they take vows. They want to feel that I am this and I want to become this. In Vedanta it is the other way round. You give up.

But what happens in Brahma Jnana? When you are one with Brahman then what happens? There is neither giving up nor there is taking up. Neither you take up the vow of becoming something, nor do say that this is there and I am giving it up. There is neither Neti Neti, nor is there desire to be this this. Neither this this nor giving up of that that. So profound and beautiful. Only you exist. What will you give up? And if you give up something, where will it go? Because wherever it goes, you will be there. What will you take up? When you take up, you take up something that is outside you, but everything is inside you. How can you take up something that is already inside you?

What happens is, for whatever reason, we see ourselves to be incomplete. And because we feel ourselves being incomplete we like to give up certain things, certain bad habits, and take resolutions. You say I will give up this and I will take up this. What we are discussing is not

something intellectual. It is not supposed to scintillate your brain. Not supposed to scintillate your neurons. It is just a feeling. You need to feel. An explorer, a scientist, a writer, explore things that are confined in a place. They need to go find new places. Mountain climbers, those who climb the Himalayas and other places they feel they need to explore that. Scientists feel that this is an unknown area, they want to know it. The writer feels that this idea has not been expressed. This should be expressed. But they don't realise that there is nothing new in this universe. Everything has been expressed. We are only repeating in a different way, that which is already there. However it is the sense of incompleteness that makes us do certain things and take up certain things. For example when you go out on a journey, you give up home. When I became a monk, I gave up my home. I left my home and I took up a new way of life. In Brahma Jnana, there is neither talking up nor giving up;It is all full. Nowhere to go. So there cannot be any act of commission, any act of omission, any act of giving up. **ग्रहो न तत्र नोत्सर्ग्रशिचन्ता यत्र न विद्यते** I - there is no kind of thought involved, there is no giving up, no taking up. **आत्मसंस्थं तदा ज्ञानमजाति समतां गतम्** - your mind is completely absorbed in Atman, Atman that which is pure consciousness, that which is pure love, that which is pure existence. You are one with existence. There is nothing to lose for you. You are full of knowledge You are full of bliss. You want to do something, either because you feel that you wish to know or you do something because you feel that you want to have joy. And you do something because you feel that your existence is in danger, These three are one and the same. Once you know you are established in that, why would you? you will just be full of knowledge, full of joy. The problem is, if somebody is arguing with you, you cannot make him understand. For example if somebody says that Ok, I reach that, what after that? These are irrelevant questions and because we don't understand that state one goes on asking irrelevant and absurd questions. Questions that have no sense.

This Samadhi is that state where there is no giving up, no taking up and no thought. Because the mind is not there, how can there be any thought? The way heat is fire, just in that way, you merge in that consciousness, you merge in that Brahman, you realise that you have gone beyond life and birth and death, There is no more birth for you, no more death for you. Complete equanimity – the sanskrit word for it is Samata. The emotions that made you go up, emotions that made you go down, all these things are gone. It is pure knowledge. As we mentioned earlier, emotions are the ultimate enemy of wisdom. Emotions sway us from the path. When we have knowledge, the emotion itself is gone, because emotions are born of the mind. And the mind itself is gone. You are in complete equanimity and being one with existence, there is neither birth nor death, nor any other kind of transformation.

But unfortunately there is a very strange thing about this samadhi. Since there is no taking up and no giving up there is no kind of contact there. By contact we mean, here is this pen,

the light comes, reflects from this pen, comes to my eyes, irritates my brain cells and they create a reaction, the mind reacts. the mind rushes out. The light goes sends a signal to your brain, there is some kind of touching. To understand all these, you need to go deeper into spiritual philosophy. Mind rushes out. Knowledge, consciousness that is within us, rides the mind, gets out from the respective organ and touches that. The light sends signal to your brain and that is some kind of touching. If you understand this, that's enough. When you are studying Vedanta philosophy, you have to go by it.

There was a time when I used to go to many teachers to understand this concept. How can something come out, How consciousness comes out of our organs? and it was long back and well then I understood. It is an intuitive understanding. You realise that the knowledge that we acquire when the light gets reflected from the pen, reaches my mind. Just a signal cannot create knowledge, because if that created knowledge, then we would have known everything. Suppose I am travelling by bus, by car, I would have known everything. But no, I don't know. I know only that which I want to know. And we often say I was not paying attention, I was not looking at it, although my eyes were there. Only when that aspect of knowledge, call it by any name, rushes out through your organs, you grasp it. I want to feel this pen, I touch it. I feel and I am trying to feel its colours. I don't feel its colours with my hands, but somehow feel. Just like that consciousness which is the basis of knowledge rush, gets out, touches it and the mind is now merged in Atman. The whole universe is within you in whatever form. How can you touch anything? You cannot touch anything. They are beyond touch. By touch i don't mean only the skin touch. Touch of all the senses. So they call it A-sparsh-Yog. Sparsh is touch, when you add A , it implies no. No touch. The Yog of non touch. The Yog of untouched. Nothing can touch Atman. Atman never touches anything. You are established in that Yoga of untouched. Non touch. Or in whatever form you translate it. This Yog which is not in touch with anything, you have to form your own word. AsparshYog -those who study Vedanta, they love using these big words. These are profound. They sound so good. When I was very young, I studied it for the first time. I loved this expression so much, I wanted to make a poster out of it. AsparshYog. And put it in my room. Fortunately better sense prevailed otherwise it would have become an object of laughter for all. AsparshYog. What is its speciality? Says it is hard for Yogis to attain. Even Yogis cannot attain it. Not every Yogi , who is in this path can attain it. What is the reason for it is that they are afraid of it.

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अस्पर्शयोगो वै नाम दुर्दशः सर्वयोगिभिः ।
योगिनो बिभ्यति ह्यस्मादभये भयदर्शिनः ॥ Karika 39॥

This Yoga, which is not in touch with anything, is hard to be attained by all Yogis (in general). The Yogis are afraid of it, for they see fear in it where there is really fearlessness

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Here is a slight input of Humour. The last expression **अभये भयदर्शिनः** - People see fear in fearlessness. Samadhi is fearlessness, because it is all one. Sometimes nowadays, when I wade through social media, sometimes I see this post, sometimes that post, sometimes I see how followers of certain sects are abusive towards Advaita. Advaita is never abusive towards any. I don't know why they are abusive. Whenever Acharya Shankar replies to them humorously. Somebody standing on the road, dares the powerful elephant and says come come. The mahout warns him that he will be crushed. Mahout finally laughs and goes on in his own way. In the same way Advaita laughs and goes on in its way.

The Karika first explains that Brahmapada, the Samadhi, is a state of fearlessness. Yet people are afraid of it. Something very interesting is that Acharya Shankar explains that, this Yog, this state, is completely devoid of any kind of touch. Mind itself is not working. So how can organs work? There is no touch, no contact. It is contactless, and there is absolutely no contact. It can be realised with the greatest of difficulties - **दुर्दशः**– dur-darsha. Extremely difficult and says one reason is that it is swa-sanvedya (स्वसमबेद्य),- intuitive. Only you can realise. A person who has realised it, has realised it. He cannot convey it to others. Nor can you gain from the knowledge of others. There is no way.

In this state you lose your individuality. Because you lose your individuality you get scared. You don't want to lose your individuality. Swami Vivekananda, while speaking in America raised this point repeatedly and said, I don't know why people are so scared of losing their individuality. It is a very interesting topic. Allow me to explain it two different ways. Loss of individuality and fear. It is a very interesting topic. I have explained a part of it in my book Carving a Sky.

One aspect is where by your very nature, your inner make is such that you wish to be a devotee. Just recall the beautiful bhajan of Meerabai - Mere to giridhar gopal dusro na koi - Giridhar Gopal, I dont have anyone else other than Krishna. A person who is absorbed in this kind of love, can that person ever go for this asparshayoga? No. If I had that kind of devotion, I would not go. Why should I?

That is the reason why, in later times there was some kind of reconciliation, by the masters, between Jnana and Bhakti. They said that if your Ishta wishes, he can even give you knowledge of oneness. Srt Ramakrishna said that some chosen ones can return from that state of oneness and be in the world living with the help of devotion. Shri Ramakrishna himself, when he was doing the sadhana, he was trained by many and there came a Vedantic monk Totapuri and asked him to meditate between eyebrows so that he can go for Advaita Sadhana. The eyebrow is not essential. Just he was asking to give up everything, In

fact it is quite dangerous to meditate between eyebrows without a teacher. It can cause you diseases. Whenever Sri Ramakrishna wanted to do it, he always found that Mother Kaii appeared before him. Same thing. Mere to Giridhar Gopal. I only have Krishna for me. He was unable to meditate. He was unable to take his mind to non-dual state. And then Totapurui became angry, picked up a piece of glass, pierced it between his eyebrows and asked him to focus on that. And this time when Mother Kali appeared, he kind of used the sword of knowledge and cut her into two pieces and he was absorbed in Asparshayoga. Or maybe the kind of samadhi Sri Ramakrishna had was different from this Asparshayog, we ordinary people really don't understand the difference between these. I think they are the same.

Now two very interesting incidents from the life of Swami Vivekananda. When he used to come to Sri Ramakrishna, he was known as Narendranath. And I will just narrate two. One is when Sri Ramakrishna touched him for the first time, with the intention of making some tests, knowing something about him, Narendranath felt as if his individuality was being blasted away and he was becoming one with the universe and started screaming Sir, what are you doing? I have parents at home. Sri Ramakrishna laughed and said, ok, calm down, maybe some other time.

Narendranath, who was going to be the world teacher within a few years, even he was scared of losing his individuality. And at another time, Sri Ramakrishna asked him - Think of my child, God as nectar. By nectar I mean Amritra. The concept of Amrita is not there in the English language, they use terms like ambrosia or nectar of immortality etc. Amrita is a drink that makes you immortal. And it is a very common expression in our Indian languages. Amrita. Narendranath said I will sit on the edge and drink. Why? Said because if I fall into it I will die. Sri Ramakrishna laughed and said, no you cannot. This is not ordinary liquid. This is the liquid of immortality. It makes you immortal. It makes you one with it. Whether you sit on the edge, whether you sit in the middle, whether you drown in it, whether you die in it, it is all the same. Just see how the fear of losing individuality is ingrained in us.

Some psychologists were doing some experiments with young babies, maybe a few days old. They were just trying to take some shadows over them, just to watch how they react. When the babies saw that shadows approach they started screaming because they felt that they were about to lose their individuality.

So why are we even discussing Asparshayog, why are we discussing Samadhi? Because in this universality actually you do not lose your individuality, rather you acquire universality. The example I used in my book, Carving a sky, is that of a plank of wood. In the wood factories, many planks of wood are there and they all look alike. When a plank is worked upon and it gets a new individuality of say a chair. So it may feel it has become different from plank of wood, but no, its individuality as a piece of wood continues. But there is added

individuality of a chair too.And as you grow further up, say ornamented chair, say a throne, your individuality is becoming of a different kind. You are losing some kind of individuality and acquiring certain kind of universality. If there is a manufacturing defect, if there is an individuality born of a manufacturing defect, it is a different thing. But the individuality that takes you to universality, when you are identifying yourself with a larger whole , that is a different kind of thing and that kind of losing the individuality is any time preferred. Atmajnana, Brahmajnana, samadhi that we are discussing, all this give you a new kind of individuality. You lose the previous individuality no doubt about it. But say for example, Swami Vivekananda, when he had those spiritual knowledge, did he really lose his individuality as a son of somebody? As the brother of somebody? No he didn't. He acquired a new individuality, which was actually universality. When you gain AtmaJnana, BrahmaJnana, the same thing happens. Unfortunately, people are scared of it. This verse says beautifully **योगिनो बिभ्यति हि अस्मत** - people are scared of it. **अभये भयदर्शिनः** - and they see fear. But this is actually a state of fearlessness. A very interesting thing. That is why people do not go for Advaita.

Nowadays there is so much intolerance in the name of religions, and forget religion, they don't even have tolerance for each other's gender. They don't understand Advaita. Advaita is something which is attacked by all, because understanding Advaita is difficult. And the very idea that you will do something where you will lose your individuality is extremely terrifying. **अभये भयदर्शिनः** - It is an irony that you see fear in the state of fearlessness.

The next verse says that not everybody can reach that state. Ordinary minds cannot reach that state. Only the highest level of Yogis can reach that level. Here I am , I have not reached that level. Naturally I am not, it only shows that I am not a great Yogi, I am a very ordinary Yogi. Not even a Yogi, just a struggler. So what is the way out for me? Verse 40 says that.

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मनसो निग्रहायत्तमभयं सर्वयोगिनाम् ।

दुःखक्षयः प्रबोधश्चाप्यक्षया शान्तिरेव च ॥ Karika 40॥

The Yogis (who do not follow the method of Jnana - Yoga as described in the Karika) depend on the control of their mind for fearlessness, destruction of misery, the knowledge of self and eternal peace.

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So what is the way out for people who are not good enough to reach that level? What is the way out for people who **अभये भयदर्शिनः** - those who are scared of all that? Yogis, who are ignorant of non-duality, persons like us, persons like you, they have to depend on control of the mind. They have to depend entirely on control of the mind. And that is the way to attain fearlessness, that is the way to attain destruction of misery, and attain self knowledge and

peace. We all want these things. We all want to have fearlessness. We want to get rid of all misery. We want to have some kind of knowledge, and we want lasting peace. Not peace only for two minutes. We want lasting peace. How do we attain it? The way out is BrahmaJnana, Be one with Atman, Be one with Brahman, acquire self knowledge. Self knowledge and self are all the same and you will have all this. But if you cannot, try to restrain your mind, keep your mind under control, keep your mind always under control. It is difficult. But if somehow you can do it, you will acquire lasting peace, self knowledge and at least you will have some kind of realisation. You will come up from the state where you are. You will get out of a miserable state of existence. And the fear that is assailing you all the time, will be over. Why do we suffer? Why are we miserable? This question keeps coming. People ask if a day will ever come when I will stop being miserable. Dear friends, that day will never come for you. Why? Because you are aviveki. You don't have the power of discrimination. You don't have control over your mind. The term aviveki means one who cannot distinguish, one who cannot discriminate. It is also one who doesn't have control over his mind. If you don't have control over your mind, then what happens? Your mind will always be in a state of turbulence. Your mind is always active. You are always running after something. Some thoughts, some acts, some objects. You want to do something, you want to acquire something. This is what Sri Ramakrishna said in very simple words, “running after Kamini Kanchan”. But no. even when you become old, when you don't have the power to go after any female, and we don't want wealth anymore, even then you don't have peace. Because your mind is always running wild and so you are never at peace. The negative things that we have mentioned here are fear, misery, ignorance, and mental disturbance. The qualities as opposed to them are peace, knowledge, fearlessness and loss of misery. The thing is, even people who are not steady, who don't have a steady mind they experience these things. But those experiences are always momentary. For a moment, for some hours, for a day, they are happy. And next moment something happens and they are back to misery, fear etc. Acharya Shankar says a person of unsteady mind can never be happy. The expression is Dukkha ksaya (दु:खक्षय)- Cessation of misery. Your misery can never go away, till you have control over your mind. Till you can make your wisdom steady, till you can make your mind steady, you should not expect the end of misery for you. You cannot expect the end of fear for you. You cannot expect the end of ignorance for you. Mind needs to be controlled. Controlled mind is fearless, full of knowledge, happy etc. This is what Karika says. So how to do it? Well there is no short cut to success. There is no easy way to happiness. You want to get out of misery, there is no easy way.

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उत्सेक उदधेर्यद्वत्कुशाग्रेणैकबिन्दुना ।

मनसो निग्रहस्तद्वद्भवेदपरिखेदतः ॥ Karika 41॥

The mind can be brought to control only by an unrelenting effort like that which is required to empty an ocean , drop by drop, with the help of a (blade of) kusa-grass.

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The mind can be controlled only by very hard effort. Karika compares this labour with draining ocean drop by drop with the help of Kusa - grass. Kusa is a type of grass. Just imagine, forget the ocean, how hard it is even to drain a mug of water like this. The mind has to be controlled, exactly like that. It is very hard. Who can do it? A highly determined person can only do it.

I am just making a detour. I have such great respect for western scholars. Western writers. Whenever they write something they do a thorough research.Long ago I read an interview by famous writer Frederick Forsyth. He used to write popular novels. He said, the fun of writing lies in the research. He would do a long research and then pour it out while writing the novel. Most Indian authors, the little that I see here and there, the first thing you realise is that hard labour has not been done. The determination, the hard work that is required to write something is quite huge. And that is why, most Indians end up being poets. Because being a poet you don't have to labour much. Try writing a novel you know how difficult it is. One of my friends beautifully said that writing poetry is like lying down under a tree, you can lie down anywhere. Of course he did not mean the great ones. Writing a novel is like creating a mansion. It has to be constructed brick by brick.

When you go by popular spirituality, it appears so easy. Spirituality is not that easy. It calls for hard labour, great effort and a lot of time. And one has to be very patient and have inner joy. Otherwise one will get depressed, and upset and will give it up. The holding power has to be there. The effort has to be there.. Only when you have these two, can you continue. And that is why Yog in Yogsutra also they say very beautifully स तु दीर्घकालनैरन्तर्यसत्कारासेवितो दृढभूमिः- (It (Abhyasa) becomes firmly grounded by long constant efforts, uninterruptedly, with earnest devotion). For a very long time you have to go labouring continuously with love. If you have these qualities, you will succeed. But this success is for control of mind. Not for BrahmaJnana. However if you have control over your mind, that gives you great results. You get out of misery, you get out of fear, you gain knowledge. So, is that enough? It is not enough. There are other problems. And they say Laya (लय)- sleepiness and Vikshep (विक्षेप) - distraction and mental wandering.

First it requires a tremendous amount of labour and you need to hold on to that desire to do hard work. After that comes the obstacle of Laya and Vikshep.

40. Meditation and its obstacles

We have already discussed verse no 41, where it was said how the mind can be brought under control, though it calls for hard work and patience and has been compared with draining out an ocean, drop by drop with the help of a blade of grass.

Just like that you have to strike down the thoughts that arise in the mind during meditation one by one. And Acharya Shankar very beautifully says that for this one has to be Khed shunya (खेद शुन्य), which means that the mind should be bereft of any kind of depressive tendencies. The technical term for this is Abasad (अबसाद). But Abasaad is not only depression, but more importantly it is the opposite of Utsaha (उत्साह), i.e.enthusiasm.

You should always be full of enthusiasm. Swami Vivekananda used to say, long faces do not make a spiritual person. You have to be joyful. And joy has to bubble from within. One should be full of joy 24x7. Your mind should always be full of joy.

When you are full of joy, it is not exuberance. Joy is different from exuberance. When you are full of joy, lots of your thoughts are burned down. You might have noted, when you are feeling low, dejected, desolate, and depressed your mind is full of thoughts. And those thoughts keep on racing in your mind. But when there is a sense of joy within you, not many thoughts come to your mind. If you go through the literature that deals with meditation, all the paths say that you have to be joyful. When they say joyful, they don't mean to say that you have to be full of mirth, lightheartedness. But you should be joyful. You identify yourself with God. You identify yourself with Atman. With Brahman. There has to be joy within you. As you all know that there is a difference between joy and mere happiness. If you are joyful, that itself takes care of lots of mental problems.

And from verse no 41, Madukya Karika discusses the obstacles in the path of knowledge. Essentially, the discussion starting this verse no 41 is about the obstacles that one faces during meditation. So, we will have a short overview of what meditation is and what are the obstacles.

Why do we need to discuss meditation? If you study Gita, you will see that each of the eighteen chapters has been named Yog; that means each chapter is a path. If you go deep into it, you will realise that the element of meditation is there in every Yog that has been discussed - Bhakti Yog, Jnana Yog, Karma Yog etc. So meditation is very important. And in the beginning of the sixth chapter of Gita, it is very clearly stated. Achrya Shankar beautifully explains that anyone who wants to take up the path of spirituality, he first has to work and work a lot. As you keep on working, a lot of gross that is there inside you burns down. And once you start working unselfishly, some level of mental purity is attained. When we say

unselfish work, we mean you dedicate the results of work to God. How do you do that? Well you say that I am not going to be affected by the results. My job is to work, I will work. And thus some level of mental purity is attained. Once some level of mental purity is attained, you are ready for meditation. When we say, you are ready for meditation, it implies that you are ready for the first steps of the path of spirituality. Spirituality is a difficult path and time taking. You can't hurry through things. The first step is that you have to work. When you start working your mind becomes active. And meditation can be done only by an intensely active mind.

If the mind is passive, if a person on Tamasik, inert, dull, a man who lives in stupor, he cannot practice meditation. When we see images of Sadhus and Yogis, who are sitting still, they did not reach that level of stillness by being tamasik, by being inert. The idea is that when you want to go for meditation, your mind has to be intensely active. If you ever see two wrestlers fighting, you might have noted that when the two wrestlers meet they hold each other's hands. And they stand still. Normally you might think that they are just standing still doing nothing. Actually a tremendous amount of force is being applied. Mind is like that. You need a huge amount of preparation so that your mind becomes active and it becomes so active that in the ultimate state it appears to be totally silent. Actually it is not silent. It is intensely active. As you realise, you become more and more active.

For an active mind one needs to get rid of selfishness. People normally tend to become extremely self centered, selfish.To get out of it, you have to practice unselfishness at various levels. Your whole personality has to be dedicated to unselfishness. And unselfishness comes through two different ways. One is you dedicate all your actions to God. Or say that I am doing it because I have to do it. You don't want to avoid something, you don't want to seek something. Whether a good result comes or an unfavourable one, both are well and good. It does not matter. This is how life has to go. The mind is now intensely active, the mind is also now a bit pure. An unselfish mind is a pure mind. And when we talk about purity of mind it is not merely about having a good character. Purity of mind means unselfishness. When we become violent, when we become obsessed, when we have sex desires these are also born of selfishness. Selfishness is at the root of all evil. Whatever evil you see in the society, whatever evil you see within you, it is all born of selfishness. So now some amount of selfishness has gone down. Because you have worked hard.

In the Ramakrishna Mission where I am, the work that we perform is generally entrusted to us by our headquarters. And you keep on doing it for years and suddenly one fine morning they say that OK fine now you are transferred , you go to some other place. So, what happens, what you did remains there and you move. The system forces you to be unselfish. You might say, "What about people who have transferable jobs?" There are differences because in a transferable job, you are getting salary, certain perks etc., however some

amount of detachment will come. But not at the level that the monks have. Once you have been working in this organisation, unselfishly, because monks don't take any salary, they don't have any perks. You just get food and shelter. That is all that you get. So, in that way slowly your mind becomes unselfish and starts becoming pure. And then you get into meditation.

How to meditate? The way to meditate is best described by Raja Yog. It systematically describes how to meditate. However what Raja Yog says is not the only path. Because Raja Yog talks about eight steps - Yama (restraints), Niyama (observances), Asana (postures), Pranayama (breath control), Pratyahara (sense withdrawal), Dharana (concentration), Dhyana (meditation), and Samadhi (absorption or stillness). But that is not needed. If you have picked up certain basic qualities in life, some amount of unselfishness, you can start. Because when they talk about Yama and Niyama etc., they are talking about getting established in those qualities, values and virtues. That may not be possible and you can do those things simultaneously too. And then Asana, Pranyama, Pratyahara, if you keep on practicing these things, it takes a lot of time. There is a shortcut. And that is meditating on God, as Patanjali beautifully says - तज्जपस्तदर्थभावनम - tajjapaḥ tadarthabhāvanam. Keep on taking his name, keep on meditating on his form. This is the most common practice that we have today in India.

We see people keep on talking about Yog and I have met many foreigners who have memorised the whole of Patanjali's Yog Sutras. It is quite popular with the foreigners. Foreigners know more about Yog than we Indians know now.

However, the description that Patanjali gives is just a part of it. Or it is just a particular path. You can practice meditation by two more paths. One is mentioned by Patanjali himself where he says, you meditate on some form of God. But that God should be represented by AUM. We have many talks, where we discuss AUM and of course Mandukya Upanishad itself is about AUM. Now God, if he represents AUM, that means He is truly God. You can take his name, taking name means taking Mantra from Guru and repeating that, doing Japam and meditating on the meaning of it. This is the crucial aspect of Meditation. You keep on repeating the name and you keep on meditating on its meaning which is form. In the process, as your mind starts throwing thoughts before you. Those who practice meditation know it really well. You need to strike on that thought. People come to us with various kinds of problems that they have during meditation. If you are truly a meditator, if you are serious about it and if you are doing it regularly, you find that certain kinds of thoughts keep coming to your mind. The best thing is to let the mind go with it. Two minutes, five minutes, ten minutes and then the mind gets its feel. Mind gets some kind of satisfaction from it and then

you say no more. Let us go back to what we were doing - meditating on God. If you keep on doing it for months and years, slowly your mind becomes extremely focussed.
So what is the way to meditate? First intense work, get some level of purity, which means unselfishness. And remember that no serious meditation can be done unless you sit in an asana. Sitting in Asana means your spine has to be straight. For example you can sit in a chair and you can meditate. The idea is that your spine has to be straight, However with that comes a rider. Not only the spine has to be correct, you have to sit for long hours. Sitting for fifteen minutes is no meditation. Sitting for half an hour is no meditation. Minimum one hour is a must. That is the minimum time that you require to meditate seriously. So you need a posture that can help you to sit for an hour without changing your posture. Because when you change your posture there is disturbance in the mind. So it is getting cracked. That should not be permitted. And that is why, the kind of asanas that Indians do like the way we normally sit, on the floor and particularly ardha-padmasana or sukhasana, are considered to be extremely good asanas. However it varies from person to person. But these are the two most common. But Padmasana is slightly difficult. If you start practising on a hard floor on some kind of soft mat, you get used to it. And after five ten fifteen minutes, you will not have any feeling of your leg there. So it does not disturb you. Initially it disturbs. There should not be any kind of external disturbance, like fear of falling down, mosquito bites, insects. So going to a forest to meditate is a risky thing.
Thoughts come; whatever you have been, the kind of life you are into, what you saw in dreams and what you did years ago. What you aspire for, what your fears are' they all start coming during meditation. Something will come today, some will come tomorrow. Certain hits that you had, certain misses that you had, certain aspirations that you have, certain obsessions that you have, something that you may not even be aware of. All these things come and they can be extremely disturbing. Sometimes people get frightened by the thoughts that come.
The favourite example that explains cleaning is that of a fountain pen that has ink dried up. I still use fountain pens. When I am not using a fountain pen for some time, the ink dries up. Then to save the nib from getting ruined, I have to wash the pen. As I start washing the pen you see nothing initially and then the ink starts coming out. You leave it in water for sometime, even after that ink keeps coming out. Then you wonder, from where it is coming out. The process of cleansing is like that. As you start meditating the cleansing process begins. When those thoughts are coming, it only means that your mind has started cleaning up the garbage, that garbage that you have been carrying from many births and definitely from this birth. Sometimes they take the form of imaginations. Sometimes they take the form of absolute nonsense. And as you keep on practising and keep on holding on to it, you find certain kinds of obstructions.

What we are going to discuss next are the obstructions. Obstructions in the path of Yog. Yog Sutras have categorised those obstructions very well. There is disease, nidra (sleep), laziness - Styana, tremors in the body etc.. But Bhranti Darshana is the worst. You start getting visions; when people get visions, mostly these are Bhranti Darshana. Illusions. And likewise. You may listen to Raja Yog talks to know more.

Here we are discussing Mandukya Karika and this Mandukya Karika is about Jnana Marg, where the process of meditation is radically different from what Raja Yog says or what we have discussed till now. In this meditation, you are trying to think that you are Atman. Of course you take the help of what we discussed - taking up a mantra, meditating on it and doing Japam. But in Jnana Yog, people practice Upanshadic meditation and their number is very very few. And I personally don't subscribe to that view. I have asked many monks in the Himalayas about this. They all said that they prefer doing Japam. So, they meditate on the thought that they are pure Atman, that they are pure consciousness, and any thought that is alien to this master thought is struck down. So the idea remains the same, your mind has to stay fixed on the object of meditation, whether that is some form of God, or the idea that you are one with Brahman. Any other thought that arises during meditation is an alien thought and must be struck down.

So, you have been striking down and imagine that you have advanced a bit, naturally you will make advancement, and you are starting doing Yog Sadhana. Three months is a long time for practice. If you are practicing regularly for maybe one hour a day and maybe one hour twice a day, then within three months you should be getting some results. Some very basic results. Some results will be there. The most important result is that your mind will become focussed and there will be some element of detachment in you. Your words will become powerful. People will start listening to you. You will be able to make quick decisions, you start becoming insightful. You will start becoming calm from within. The general tendency that you have, to think that you are not well, you are not healthy etc., all these thoughts go away. Because slowly your mind starts moving away from your body. These are the immediate results and you will find that maybe within six months or a year, if you are continuing with your practice, you think of something and that happens, even if it is something unusual. Now we don't know how exactly it happens, but it happens. Sometimes it may so happen that you say something which is absolutely unusual and it happens. These are known as Yogic powers. These are not important but it shows that you are not the old self. A sense of detachment comes.

You might have noted that kids of four or five, get tremendously obsessed with whatever they are doing. If they are happy they are happy, if they are sad, they are sad. If they are crying they are crying, If they want to play they want to play. And they don't like any kind of disturbance in whatever they were doing. There is some kind of urgency with them. There is

some kind of impatience with them. Their anger, joy and everything is like that. When they grow up, they continue to be like that. But as you meditate these bonds from the world start loosening up. Imagine yourself tied with a tight rope. You cannot move your limbs, can't move your body,you are suffocating. Well that is how we are in this world. Now as you start meditating, slowly the tightness of the rope starts slackening. It becomes slightly loose. You can move your limbs and all. And a time comes when you won't feel that bondage any more. You are relatively free. You can freely move your limbs. But even that is not ultimate freedom. For example, suppose that your Ishta is Sri Krishna. That means your chosen deity, God is Sri Krishna. And you do Japam of his mantra. Mantra is given to you by your Guru, whatever mantra that may be. In fact there are many mantras that are devoted to Lord Krishna. Suppose you keep doing Japam of that mantra and meditate, say on Lord Krishna, as you do japam, you see that your Guru might have told you how to keep the count. They say you have to keep the count, i.e., the number of times you are performing Japam. And as your mind becomes calm, your mind becomes intense you realise that you really cannot keep the count properly. That is quite possible and perfectly alright. If you feel that your mind stays fixed with your lord, then it is perfectly alright to keep on doing inner japam. You don't have to worry much about keeping the count. And then begins the tricks. Under normal conditions, those of you who are into meditation would know that when you close your eyes there is complete darkness within and when you open your eyes there is this phenomenal world. The world of phenomena. Phenomenon means where everything is changing all the time. There are objects interacting upon objects and subjects, that is you are looking at those objects and getting identified with those things. So this world of phenomena outside and darkness inside, this is common with nearly every one. And believe me, those who meditate, they don't even meditate on God. Most of them keep on meditating on some kind of imagination or they meditate on some picture. You Guru told you to meditate on Lord Krishna. And you meditate on some picture of Lord Krishna. But your Guru never told you to meditate on a picture of Krishna, they ask you to meditate on living Krishna. In earlier times there were no pictures. And much before that there were not even statues. So there were only words and they could form a picture. And that is why Upanishadic meditation was more popular in those days. But now we have aids to meditation like pictures and statues. If you keep on meditation only on the picture of Lord Krishna you will end up becoming a picture, nothing more than that. And if you keep on meditating on the statue of Lord Krishna, you will end up being just a statue. That is not meditation. Meditation is where you see living Krishna. Just to give an example, you are looking at me right now. What are you looking at? a picture, a moving picture, a video. If you think of me, you will find a different kind of frame coming. If you see me in a dream, that would be an entirely different kind of frame. When you see me, the picture that you see, what you see is entirely different, That is because of the different

pathways that the brain uses. There might be a three dimensional picture. There might be imaginations, there might be dreams, there might be actual seeing. In meditation you have to focus on the actual seeing. However, what we see in dreams is quite life-like. So in case you have some dream of your God, your Ishta, you can meditate on that. Because at least there would be some kind of three dimensional representation. I hope I am clear to you.

The funny thing begins after that. Once you reach the state where you can feel the living presence of your Ishta, your God, then different types of obstacles start coming, and these are the real obstacles. We discussed obstacles like diseases, body tremor and the sense of stupor, laziness, these are bhranti darshana, these are very basic. When you advance, obstacles are also quite advanced. And most students of spirituality get stuck up here. The larger number get stuck with the problems that we discussed earlier. Either Byadhi, Nidra etc. Those who proceed get stuck in what we are discussing. Those of you might have read my book, Tiya, Tiya is basically a spiritual book, it is about spiritual journey. You find different beings, different folks, they are stuck up in different settings. You need to break through. So, what are those? The first one is known as Laya. Laya means when your mind becomes absorbed in certain things but it is some kind of stupor, a particular kind of dullness. Those who have done deep meditation, would know that. Unless you do deep meditation you will not understand it. It is a kind of self hypnosis. Sometimes you may fall asleep during meditation. You are meditating and you are thinking of, say, Lord Krishna. And you might go into a state of hypnosis. Self induced hypnosis, and you think that you are doing it big. But no. You are totally stuck up. Similarly, sometimes it so happens, suppose you are meditating on Lord Krishna and everything is alright and you are seeing his feet, torso, neck, head, everything. Now you are able to meditate on the whole form of Lord Krishna. Perfectly alright. Suddenly you find that from nowhere some kind of fly comes and it sits on the face of the Lord. But it is imagination. But you are not even able to make that fly move away from there. You cannot make it fly away. This is a kind of problem that one faces. Those of you who have done meditation would probably know all these. So there is a kind of stupor, you are not able to move it away. You have to proceed farther.

The next stage after Laya is Vikshep. Your mind has become more intense and suddenly some kind of worldly distraction is there. You think of something and it distracts you. Some kinds of thoughts distract you. It comes to most Yogis, those who practice meditation and those who are at a higher level. These are not ordinary classes of obstructions. Laya and Vikshep.

The third one is extremely dangerous. It is known as Kashaya. Kashaya is a particular type of taste. For example, the taste of Haritaki is Kashaya. It is not really bitter. It gives you a different type of taste. Kashaya is extremely dangerous. In this you get an extremely deep attraction for something from the past. It may be some idea, it may be you were angry with

somebody in the past. And suddenly that thought comes and you cannot get over it. Just cannot. Similarly you had loved somebody. You loved your mother, you had some friend, your mind goes all out and then you say that I must contact this person and the whole thing gets disturbed. We are talking of a higher level, we are not talking about ordinary people. So there is Laya, then there is Vikshep and there is Kashaya. And the fourth is Rasasvada. You taste rasa. In this what happens is that you don't get the vision of God, you can get self knowledge but there is some kind of temporary bliss. There is a difference between Laya and Rasaswad. Laya is stupor and Rasasvada is some kind of bliss but that is temporary and after a few days that will vanish. So many great Yogis mistake Rasasvada with ultimate realisation.

Mandukya Karika discusses these four kinds of obstruction. First it says in verse no 41 that mind has to be emptied, cleaned up and while cleaning up four kinds of obstructions will come. Karika does not discuss here the kind of process taken up for meditation which we find in Raja Yog. It does not even discuss the problems that we face. It simply discusses the higher obstacles. But I felt I should make things clear and the whole thing should be brought on a single platform.

The bottom line is the ideal that you have chosen for meditation whether that is Aham Brahmasmi or some Ishta, some mantra that your Guru gave, you need to focus on that. You need to stick with that. Think of the words that your Guru said. No Guru will tell you the wrong thing. There is a very famous saying , there is never a bad student, there are only bad teachers. But in spirituality there are never bad teachers. There are only bad students. What are the other things required? On to verse 42.

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उपायेन निगृह्णीयाद्विक्षिप्तं कामभोगयोः ।
सुप्रसन्नं लये चैव यथा कामो लयस्तथा ॥ Karika 42॥

The mind distracted by desires and enjoyments as also the mind enjoying pleasure in oblivion (trance like condition) should be brought under discipline by the pursuit of proper means. For the state of oblivion is as harmful as desires.

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Mind is always distracted by desires. Desires ultimately result in fulfilment and there is enjoyment. So you have desires and you have enjoyments - should be brought under control. You should not allow your mind to run wild, by proper means. (for proper means, I will suggest you to listen to our Raja Yog talks). So also the mind is enjoying pleasure in inactivity. This is the problem. The great obstacle. So you have two things - Raja Guna and Tamo Guna. Because of Raja Guna you want to run after enjoyment. Because of Tamo Guna you want to live in stupor. The best example that I can give you for stupor is those of you who have read Tiya, the opening line says, good morning good people and then it was lying flat and was wondering why all the birds keep flying away in the early morning without

enjoying whatever is there. It is a beautiful description of Laya. Suppose you had a very good sleep. When you go into snooze mode, you are just lying down half awake half asleep, thinking sometimes of God, sometimes thinking of good things. This is Laya. This is some kind of stupor, this is some kind of self hypnosis. But this is extremely enjoyable. And because it is enjoyable, it is an obstacle. During meditation also this happens, during meditation the mind goes into the state of Laya. The idea is that the mind should not be either in an inactive mode, that is passive mode, nor in an active mode i.e.,, your mind is running wild. I have to do this, I have to plan this, things like that. Mind must not go into either of these two modes. Yog Sutra famously says Chitta Vritti Nirodha. This has been discussed earlier. The thoughts that arise in your mind, need to be controlled. What are the problems in that? One is that your mind tends to be hyperactive and the second one is that your mind tends to become passive. Neither are permitted - neither passivity, nor hyper activity. How to do it? Pull your mind back to your ideal. If you think yourself to be Atman, as taught by your Guru, not by what you pick up by listening here and there, focus on that. If you have a mantra from a Guru, focus on that. Keep on doing Japam. Thousands of times- every time you sit five thousand, ten thousand times. It is like bodybuilding. When you go to gym you go on doing certain exercises and then your muscles start building. When you do Japam, your spiritual muscles start developing. Then slowly this kind of tendency of mind running wild or going into a stupor during meditation stops. And when the mind runs wild, it is always towards enjoyment, always towards desires. It is the first obstacle that we face. How to get rid of that. There are different ways. First is that you think of your Ishta, think of your ideal. And secondly - on to verse 43

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दुःखं सर्वमनुस्मृत्य कामभोगान्निवर्तयेत् ।

अजं सर्वमनुस्मृत्य जातं नैव तु पश्यति ॥ Karika 43॥

The mind should be turned back from the enjoyment of pleasures, remembering that all this is attended with misery. If it be remembered that everything is the unborn (brahman), the born (duality) will not be seen

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Just to remind you, we are discussing a commentary on the Upanishad. So, they are mostly discussing things that are related to Atmajnana. This is Jnana Marga. So, the ideals that are mentioned here belong to Jnana Marga. Whenever your mind runs after enjoyment, whenever your mind runs after desires, whenever you think of something enjoyable, remember that **दुःखं सर्वमनुस्मृत्य** - every desire has its origin in pain , continues in pain and ends in pain. The example that they gave is when you want to make money first you have to struggle a lot. You have to labour a lot, struggle a lot. That means through a lot of pain you earn money. And when you have wealth you are always scared that Income tax people may come, or enforcement directorate may attack you, make raids. If you have a lot of wealth. Or

people from charitable organisations like us can approach you for some donation. Charlie Chaplin married four times. Once when he was about to have divorce, he left a particular state in America and went to some other state just to avoid those legal problems where he may have to lose money. Now all over the world they are making divorce difficult just by imposing such a division of wealth that people say that it is better to remain in the current marriage than to have a divorce. So you are always worried that you will lose your wealth and once you lose your wealth again you are in pain. Earning wealth is pain, maintaining wealth is pain, and once you lose wealth it is pain. Every desire has its root in pain, continues in pain and ends in pain. You keep on reminding this. Your obsession with desires will go away. Your mind will also become clear. You will not be running after desires and because you are not running after desires, your mind will not be creating thoughts about desires.

अजं सर्वमनुस्मृत्य जातं नैव तु पश्यति - turn back the mind from the enjoyment of desires remembering that they beget only misery. Do not see the created objects, remembering that all this is unborn Atman. This is the speciality of Mandukya Karika. Now here Mandukya Karika will not be explaining how to focus on your Ishta, your chosen deity. Mandukya Karika will say that remember that everything is unborn Atman. Right from the beginning this has been repeated that Atman is the ultimate reality and that is unborn. It is unborn and it is undecaying and it is undying. When I think of this pen essentially it is Brahman. It has certain utility. It has a particular colour, it has a particular form. And I also know that what this pen can do, more or less other pens can also do. So my obsession for this pen is not much. But when you run after your desires, when you are running after objects or persons you think special, you are obsessed. But if you are a student of Mandukya Karika, and you have studied Mandukya Upamishad thoroughly you will know that unborn Brahman, Brahman which is Aja, the infinite Brahman, that is the ultimate reality. And everything else that is there, everything that I consider to be special, is in reality Brahman. So why run after it? To have a healthy body, you just need rice and dal. Now people who have lots of money like to have Biryani. Once it so happened that I was in Delhi and one of my friends had invited me. He asked me what kind of food I would like to have for lunch at his home. Would I like Continental or Chinese or something else? I don't even know what is Continental food, or what Chinese food is. I have never taken all those things. Being a monk here at Ramakrishna Mission, I only know what is rice and what is daal, I said don't you have anything Indian? Probably he was surprised.

The important thing is to have a full belly. With that full belly you are going to continue activities for the whole day. Why worry so much? The food should be wholesome, easily digestible and healthy. That is all. This is what every book of spirituality will tell you. Never

pay attention to anything that has some value of enjoyment. You need certain things to eat. You need to drink water. You need to have food. You need sleep. You need a bed, you need some shelter. That is alright. But it doesn't mean that you need a palace and you need the most expensive mattress and most expensive food etc.. If you are hankering for those, you will need extra money. For that you will have to work extra. You will have to labour. That will distract you when you meditate. You will be complaining that you didn't get the right food etc. So, think of Brahman, think of the chosen Ideal and bring your mind repeatedly there. That begets peace but on the way you get the problems that we discussed.

41. Nothing was ever born

We have been discussing mediation and the obstacles to it. We explained what meditation is.

The four major obstacles or distractions are Laya, Vikshep, Kashay and Rasasvada. Those of you who are into meditation may know about these four. But, mind it, for most of us meditation just means sitting down for a while, maybe fifteen minutes, maybe half an hour, sitting quietly, trying to breathe in a rhythm. These things relax your mind. And most of the times when popular teachers are talking about meditation, essentially they are talking about mental relaxation. That is not meditation. Meditation is something deep. By deep we mean, when you have meditation based on the path of knowledge where you say that Brahman alone is real, everything else is mithya, false. Or you take the path of Bhakti where you have an Ishta and you try to focus only on that.

So, once you have overcome the initial obstacles like attachment, aversion etc., then comes the higher problems that the mind has to encounter. When we look at this world, we know that for us, this world is made up of gross objects. And our body is made of the same thing from which this world is made. So our body is gross. And day and night we are taking in this gross world. Everything, the smell that we have, the taste that we have, things that we see are extremely gross. Consequently the mind stays at an extremely gross level. That is why you will find that most people deride religion, they make fun of religion, they come up with hundreds of objections against religion. This is true particularly of the West, because the West is deeply steeped in materialism. What people forget is that India has always loved life. If you listen to our talks on Hinduism series where we have explained some of the mantras from the Vedas, there you can see that the Sages are teaching us to pray for a good life. So much so that unlike in other religions, gaining wealth and enjoying life are the two important purposes of life - Artha and Kama. People have misconceptions about Hindu religion. And our sages said that striving for Mukti, striving for liberation is meant for the chosen few. Only

when one has gone through all these enjoyments, and say that is enough and nothing is required, even heaven is not required, only then can one aspire for Mukti. It is easy to say that I don't want Heaven, but most people who are at the age of dying, who have grown old, even they don't even want to die., forget about giving up desire of heaven, they don't want to die, Their attraction for the world is so strong, they don't even understand what heaven might mean. So we are attached to the world and the attachment and attraction is at an extremely gross level. For example when you offer food to a dog, it will pounce upon it. They will not understand the finer things of life. These animals live entirely on senses. But we human beings have evolved from being animals, but our thoughts have become so gross, that it seems that we are going back only to the level of senses. How sad is that! In fact most of us forcibly make our mind extremely gross.

Now once you start meditating, the first thing is to get out of these gross things. So your love for good things in life, as they say food, clothes,recognition, love, friendship, companionship etc.,all these things will go away. You will like to be left alone. But that is not loneliness. It is being alone. And you will love to be living in the ideal world. You will prefer to be in introspective mode. Your love for finer music, finer art will grow. Only then you are ready for meditation.

Most people who go for meditation, they just make the pockets of the teacher heavier. Nothing more than that. Anyway it is good. You were in a kind of life where you seek only enjoyment. But now you are moving away and going to some Ashram, some centre where you are learning to be quiet, learning to be alone, that itself is a great achievement, no doubt. But anyway that is not the real thing. If you feel that your mind has started becoming subtle, I can assure you, for most the mind is still gross. So do not conclude things about yourself. It is not to demean you. I am just telling a fact. Then the mind tends to go into inertness, known as laya. And sometimes the mind starts rushing towards some object. You are sitting for meditation and suddenly some thoughts come and it becomes extremely powerful. It will make you get up from your seat. It can be so powerful.

And then there is Kashaya, first one is laya and then Vikshep. Kashaya is more dangerous because it takes you to some old thoughts. In one of the commentaries on Yog Sutras, a teacher has very beautifully explained it. That there might be a Yogi, who has given up everything and he might have even lost his family. He is deep into meditation and a stage comes when suddenly memories come haunting and he starts thinking of his wife and thinks how good his wife was and so on. And your mind goes there and gets hooked. The mind is so subtle that it has powers to get hooked to something and becomes exponentially strong. Now unless you get into meditation, you will not understand these things.

And the distraction is when you start enjoying the state of meditation. This is known as Rasasvada.

It is good to remind you that Mandukya Karika is a scripture. Here a particular kind of conversation, a particular kind of discourse is going on. India was extremely advanced in certain areas. And it was not advanced in certain other areas. When it came to literature, philosophy etc, India was extremely advanced. Just imagine, people talk about western logic. But Naya, Indian logic is a way of life of India in certain areas. Mithila was famous for Naya. And from there in Nabadwip in Bengal came Navya Naya. It is a way of life. Forget about arguments. So when people keep talking about Western philosophy, Socrates, Aristotle and Logic etc, and so on, one may find it ridiculous. Forget about just knowledge, here people made that way of their life. People talk about Christianity. But think of Hinduism here where religion has entered every sphere of life. Now in the Indian system there are three major kinds of discussions. The first is known as Vaada - which means the teacher is explaining something to the student. For example, here we are into Vada. Here we expand the subject, explain the subject. Then there is Jalpa. In Jalpa, you try to dislodge the arguments of your opponent. As often happens in Parliaments or when kids quarrel. You might have seen kids arguing and quarreling. They are always trying to prove the other party wrong. And the third, more interestingly, is Vitanda. There you don't have to prove anything. What you do is you just go on opposing everything that the person in front of you says, Mandukya karika belongs to Vaada. It is explaining something. You need to understand well that it is not here to contradict something. If it is contradicting something it is only to impress certain ideas in our minds. They don't even want to explain certain things. They want us to change our way of life, they want us to change our views of life, they want us to move on the path of immortality. How do you do it? First you need to make your mind calm. Once your mind becomes calm, once you withdraw yourself from the world and you start introspecting, you become in-drawn, you become contemplative from there, you become meditative, and your mind becomes little focussed. Once your mind becomes little focussed, you start walking, you start moving on the road to immortality. This is being described

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लये सम्बोधयेच्चित्तं विक्षिप्तं शमयेत्पुनः ।

सकषायं विजानीयात्समप्राप्तं न चालयेत् ॥ Karika 44॥

If the mind becomes inactive in a state of oblivion, awaken it again. If it is distracted, bring it back to the state of tranquility. (In the intermediary state) know the mind containing within it desires in potential form. If the mind has attained to the state of equilibrium, then do not disturb it again

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So as your mind starts going into a stupor, as in deep sleep (Sushupti), it needs to brought back and fixed in self knowledge – atma-viveka (आत्म विवेक), and if the mind gets distracted with some gross object, it has to be calmed down.

When I was very young and extremely immature. In monastic life 25 or 27 is no age. So, my favourite example is, once I was sitting for meditation and instantly some thoughts came about a brother monk who had done something wrong to me. And I became so angry that I could not contain it. It was a very silly thing, the whole idea was so silly. Under normal conditions, it would have been never expressed. For example, say, I have been reading or walking or talking, this would not have come to mind. Simply because I was sitting for meditation, it became extremely powerful. I got up from my seat, went out in search of him and gave him a piece of my mind. I still feel so guilty about it, extremely apologetic about it. But this is what happens. Unless there is a teacher to guide you, practically at every step and unless you are very careful, it can be disastrous. Because here in this case he was a brother monk, and he took it in his stride. The same thing can be about lust. Your mind may get attracted to some female and you can never come out of it. It can be disastrous.

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नाऽऽस्वादयेत्सुखं तत्र निःसङ्गः प्रज्ञया भवेत् ।

निश्चलं निशचरच्चित्तमेकीकुर्यात्प्रयत्नतः ॥ Karika 45II

(The mind) should not be allowed to enjoy the bliss that arises out of the condition of Samadhi. It should be freed from attachment to such happiness through the exercise of discrimination . If the mind once attaining to the state of steadiness seeks externality, then it should be unified with the Atman, again with effort.

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We are discussing Upanishads and Upanishads belong to Brahmavidya and Brahmavidya means oneness and that oneness is being explained here in verse no 45. As you meditate, powers will come to you. Powers are bound to come to you. If you listen to our Inspired talks of Swami Vivekananda, you may remember that there Swamiji in the beginning itself explained that as you start advancing spiritually good things and bad things will start coming to you in quick succession. A worldly person enjoys happiness for a long time, a worldly person suffers miseries for a very long time. But a person given to meditation, a person given to spiritual life, a monk, has to suffer a lot because he enjoys a lot. And suffering and enjoyment they both come in quick succession, Something good happens today, somebody will insult you tomorrow, somebody will hurt you tomorrow. It only means that your Karma, both good and bad, is getting destroyed very quickly. The idea is to move towards oneness. Gita says सत्त्वं सुखे सञ्जयति रज: कर्मणि भारत| ज्ञानमावृत्य तु तम: प्रमादे सञ्जयत्युत || 9|| – (Sattva binds one to material happiness; rajas conditions the soul toward actions; and tamas clouds wisdom and binds one to delusion.) There are qualities. Sattva, Rajas and Tamas,. When you are meditating all these three become extremely powerful. Tamas takes you towards to sleep, Rajas makes you hyper and Sattva lets you enjoy meditation. You are enjoying it. But your goal is not enjoyment. Once a senior monk, not that I mean insult to him, but these are common expressions, and he told one of my brother monks in Bengali, brother you came here to find peace. Did you find

peace? And that young monk, an intelligent person, wise and learned he instantly replied, “Swamiji, I did not come here for peace. I came here for knowledge. Knowledge of Atman. If that knowledge gives me peace, well and good, and if the path to that knowledge is besieged with suffering or other kinds of problems, so much the better for it”. Please remember this. Our goal is Knowledge of oneness and oneness is knowledge. Nothing less than that, and if there be suffering for it, let there be suffering. If you are having a good time, have good time. Nothing less than that. No tamas, No rajas no sattva. Even enjoying that state to aspire for happiness to aspire for pleasant feeling, that is not the goal of meditation. Meditation means that pleasurable feeling that you get during meditation, thinking of Sri Ramakrishna or whoever your Ishta is, even that is to be shunned. What is the goal? To realise God. Swami Vivekananda very clearly told his disciples that our goal is God realisation. Nothing less than that will do. This is what Mandukya Karika is teaching us. Neither Laya, nor Vikshep nor Kashaya nor Rasasvada. It says that if you feel that you are enjoying the Rasa of that meditation, stay detached.

See, unless you get Samadhi these problems will be there and they are disastrous. We don't run after objects. The physical objects that are there, we don't run after them. Our organs don't run after objects. Our senses also don't run after objects. It is the mind that runs. Why? Mind is the pleasure bank. It has experienced all the pleasures. It is also the bank for pains and it wants to stay away from that. And from there it instructs the senses to take in things that are pleasurable and those senses pass on that information to the mind and from there the mind passes on the information to organs of action to act. For example, suppose you are meditating, and suddenly you listen to music that you like. Your mind shifts to that music. The mind may instruct the organs of movement., the legs to move towards that. And you are up from the meditation. There is a similar description in my book Param. Param is meditating and he hears a strand of music. He gets up to go and listen intently. We are not guilty, our organs are not guilty, our senses are not guilty. The real problem lies with the mind. It draws from the world. Mind also takes you to God. What an amazing thing mind this is! Our Acharya, Gaudapada explains, if you are a Yogi and if you want to attain Samadhi, then make sure not to enjoy Sattva, that means when you are totally focussed, you are meditating and you are enjoying it. Even that is not permitted. That means your mind has reached a very high level of concentration and yet another part of your mind is keeping an eye on that and says that well, I am enjoying. I must stop it. Why? Because the enjoyment that you are getting is from Gunas - Sattva, Rajas and Tamas. These three belong to Maya, these three belong to Prakriti. These three belong to Avidya. Right from the beginning we are discussing that our goal of life is to go beyond Maya, the goal of life is to go beyond Prakriti. Our goal of life is to go beyond ignorance. Normally when we think of ignorance, we mean we have some kind of ignorance, and we want to gain knowledge.

Love for knowledge and love for pleasure and happiness comes from Sattva Guna. If your mind is duelling on knowledge or if your mind is duelling on happiness, you are in Sattva Guna and if you are on Sattva guna you are under bondage. There should be no pain, no pleasure, no stupor, no mental activity - hyper nothing. You just move on. These are high meditations. So you focus on what? Since this is the path of knowledge you focus on satta matram (सत्ता मात्रम) - pure existence. Only existence and nothing outside existence. Those who practice the path of devotion for them also it is satta matram, but of God, your Ishta. Only God exists, nothing else exists. That is when we say that Brahma Satya, Jagat Mithya, Brahman is truth and this world is false. Those who follow the path of devotion, they also say that same thing, God alone truth and everything else is false. Sri Ramakrishna had said beautifully in Bengali Mairi bolchhi, (I swear) Ishwar boi ami kichhu jani na. (I know nothing other than God). Other than God, everything else is Mithya. Once you go beyond these four distractions, on to Karika 46,

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यदा न लीयते चित्तं न च विक्षिप्यते पुनः ।

अनिङ्गनमनाभासं निष्पन्नं ब्रह्म तत्तदा ॥ Karika 46॥

When the mind does not merge in the inactivity of oblivion, or become distracted by desires, that is to say when the mind becomes quiescent and does not give rise to appearances, it verily becomes Brahman.

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As your mind becomes tamasik, getting into stupor, bring back the ideal and if it becomes Vikshipta, if it starts moving away from the ideal, make it calm, But how?

When you tend to go into some kind of slumber, many of you might have experienced it, that the moment you sit for meditation, you tend to fall asleep. So you need to have a little more time and go on meditating. Slowly it goes away. The second one is when your mind becomes Rajasik, mind becomes more active. That is when this problem of Vikshipta comes. Your mind gets attracted to some object. So see, your mind has to work at two different levels. One is the mind which is trying to focus itself and the second aspect is your own mind keeping a watch over it. Can you imagine how difficult meditation can be! The term here is Mind which works in four different ways.The first one is चित्त- Chitta which collects data. Then there (मन) Mana which organises data. Then there is Buddhi (बुद्धि) - It fixes data, and then there is Ahankara (अहंकार) where it identifies itself with data. It is like a gentleman who is father to his Kid, husband to his wife and boss to his colleagues in the office. Basically they are the same person, Just depending upon what kind of function it is performing, he is known by different names. Mind is just like that. Depending on what kind of work it is doing, it is known as either Chitta or Mana or Buddhi or Ahankara. In meditation as also in life, you need to have a very clear perception of your

mind. On the one hand the mind is working and on the other hand you are watching your mind. This happens, we all do it all the time, particularly when you are trying to fall asleep. You might have seen that so many thoughts come and you want to fall asleep and you are watching yourself, you are watching your dreams and you say that I shouldn't be seeing dreams, I shouldn't be thinking like that and things like that. Sometimes we chide ourselves for thinking certain wrong things. But in meditation, these two aspects are observed where one aspect is trying to focus and concentrate and another aspect is keeping a watch over it. The moment you are going into Tamas, into darkness, you have to wake yourself up. When you become hyperactive, trying to fix yourself to some objects you need to calm down. Sometimes some kind of past obsession comes, basically it is in seed form. Laya and Vikshep are something like plants, that you can see very clearly. But Kashaya is a seed form. As you know, the destruction of seeds is extremely difficult.

Long ago in 1960s America sent some wheat to us. And with that came seeds of some wild grass, known as parthenium. Wherever Parthenium grows it does not allow anything else to grow. It is also a health hazard. And you will find Parthenium practically in the whole of North India. Gift of America to India Parthenium. And Parthenium is so viscous and its seed is so powerful you just cannot destroy it. Once Parthenium starts growing in a land ,know that the land is ruined. You go on cleaning it and cleaning it and it is very difficult to get rid of it. Our desires are like Parthenium grass. Its seeds are lying there, and the moment there is rain, some kind of manure, it sprouts. And it destroys everything that is noble in our life. The example often used in such cases is that of forests. Now our mind is not like a forest, but more like a jungle of Parthenium grass. It ruins everything, it won't let anything grow. It just eats up anything and it won't die. Kashaya is seed form. Those of you who do a lot of meditation might have noted that you are sitting for meditation and suddenly you remember somebody whom you had seen when you were barely 4 or 5 years old, or you might remember a scene that you might have seen when you had been just 4or 5. Or you may remember some quarrel that you might have had with somebody or some pain that was inflicted upon you. And then your mind gets fixed completely. What do you do about it? Nothing can you do. Buddhi, the intellect, the power of the mind that takes our life forward, the right thinking stuff it immediately puts a full stop. It is like a goat that controls the elephant.

In meditation, concentration is never a problem. Taking the mind away from something is the real problem. Most people don't even realise this. Because if you have problems concentrating you will land in a lunatic asylum. People who cannot focus on anything for a long time. See people who have nervous breakdowns, people who are under the spell of temporary or permanent insanity, one big problem with them is that they lose the sense of proportion. They lose the sense of continuity. So they are talking about something and mid-

sentence they break and go somewhere else.That means they are not able to concentrate. We don't have that problem during meditation. Our problem when we sit for meditation is that we get too much concentration on things that we don't want. And the remedy for that is, what is Known in Yog as Pratyahara (प्रत्याहार). You need to withdraw. Here Pratyahara is being discussed about three different things. Laya, Vikshep and Kashaya. This is very important and once your mind reaches equanimity don't let it move from there. We are discussing meditation according to the path of knowledge - Jnana Marga. But meditating in Jnana Marg, path of knowledge is extremely difficult. One cannot really meditate on formless. We don't want to name anybody or any particular religion, but that is the problem. Anyone who knows about religion, knows that you cannot, just cannot meditate on formless. You can take the name of the formless, but you cannot meditate. How can you meditate on the formless?

Mediation according to Bhakti is where you are meditating on some form of God. Your mind is limited, a limited object can hold only a limited object. Mind can mediate only God with form. It can never meditate on God, the formless. So in this case when you are meditating on God with form there also you need to do the same thing. You have to say Oh! Mind come back and let us meditate on my Ishta. And you need to remind yourself that the mind tends to go into stupor, the mind tends to become hyper active, and the mind tends to rake up old issues. Issues which are now in the seed form. And that is why destruction of these seeds becomes extremely important.

Without having Samadhi, these seeds cannot be destroyed. Sri Ramakrishna had beautifully said, in the Gospel of Sri Ramkrishna - Jnani bhaii Tarashe (জ্ঞানী ভয় তরাসে) - Even a Jnani is scared. Why is Jnani scared? Because he knows, without attaining Samadhi, the seeds cannot be destroyed.

Vijnani means one who has experienced Samadhi, Jnani means one who is a little lower than that stage. Somebody has now written about VijnanaVada, God knows what he is writing. Because Vijnana means when you have Nirvikalpa Samadhi. That is the goal of Upanishads, that is what Acharya Shankar has been teaching, Not that Sri Ramakrishna had taught something new. So just getting some quotation from here, quotation from there, doesn't prove anything new. These are all products of immature minds. Sri Ramakrishna says even a Jnani is scared. He gives the example of Vasishtha, a person like Vasishtha, even Vasishta! Why? Because the seeds of all your acts are very much there. And because they are there, they may sprout any minute. But once you become Vijnani, once you have known Advaita, once you have reached the state of samadhi where there is ultimate oneness, once you are established in that knowledge of oneness, because knowledge of

oneness and oneness are the same thing, then these seeds get destroyed. Then nothing can distract you.

Your mind now loses its characteristics of being with Satva, Rajas and Tamas. And merges in Brahman. Brahman whose characteristics have been defined beautifully. When the mind does not lapse into inactivity and is not distracted by desires, that is to say when it remains unshakeable and does not give rise to appearances it really becomes Brahman. Mind, what a rascal it is, it is a real rascal. When you want to rest it, it becomes active. When you want to make it active it goes into rest. When you want to meditate, you start feeling sleepy. In higher meditation, these obstructions come and yet when it reaches the state of equanimity, when there is neither stupor, nor activity nor enjoyment. Then what happens? It becomes one with Brahman. Mind does not remain mind. In that state, the mind that is meditating, the process of meditation and the object of meditation, they all become one. Because in the path of knowledge you are meditating on pure existence and because there is only pure existence, there will be no mind obviously.

For example suppose your Ishta is Shiva and you say Shiva alone exists, only Shiva exists, and you are meditating in such a way that nothing else remains, Not even Kailash remains where Shiva stays, and not even Parvati remains, who is the power of Shiva. Then what happens? Only Shiva remains. Only Shiva. Where is Shakti now? Gone. Where is Kailash? gone. So where is your mind? Gone. What remains? Only Shiva. How is it different from Brahman? No difference.

When your mind reaches that state where you realise that nothing exists other than Shiva, when you realise that nothing exists other than God, how is it different from Advaita. It is in no way different. It is the oneness. Pure existence. A person who has taken the path of knowledge, he reaches a state where he realises that there is Isness, there is pure existence and nothing else. The person who is meditating on God, he realises that God alone exists, nothing else exists. How is it different? They are not. There is no difference. No. In that state you have gone completely beyond Tamas, Rajas and Sattva.

यदा न लीयते चित्तं - when the mind does not lapse into Laya. **न च विक्षिप्यते पुनः** - Neither in Vikshep and it does not even give rise to appearances seed form. It verily becomes Brahman. It does not acquire the knowledge of Brahman, because knowledge of Brahman and Brahman are one and the same as explained earlier. So what happens then? Acharya Shankar explains that -"यथा दीपो निवातस्थो नेङ्गते सोपमा स्मृता |योगिनो यतचित्तस्य युञ्जतो योगमात्मन: - -Yathā dīpo nivāta-stho neṅgate sopamā smṛtā" is a Sanskrit phrase from the Bhagavad Gita (6.19) meaning "As a lamp in a windless place does not flicker, so the mind of a yogi remains steady in meditation". This example of a lamp is self explanatory and we

have all seen such a non-flickering flame in a candle at a windless place. Mind becomes completely still. It means that Tamas Rajas and Sattva have lost their function. That is when your mind becomes one with Brahman. Now you are one with Brahman. Once you have tasted that, once you have known Brahman, you have become Brahman, and you can never again fall. As Sri Ramakrioshna says, those who have not yet experienced Samadhi. Samadhi of non-duality, only they are scared. Once you experience it there is no way that you can fall down from there. Absolutely no way. You have known the truth now. Not only have you known the truth, you have become one with it. You are now one with Brahman.

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स्वस्थं शान्तं सनिर्वाणमकथ्यं सुखमुत्तमम् ।
अजमजेन ज्ञेयेन सर्वज्ञं परिचक्षत ॥ Karika 47॥

The highest bliss is based upon the realisation of Self, it is peace, identical with liberation, indescribable and unborn. It is further described as the omniscient Brahman, because it is one with the unborn Self which is the object sought by Knowledge.

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The characteristics of Brahman are explained here. Once you reach that state of Supreme Bliss, it is not only the knowledge of the Supreme, it is supreme bliss, by the self and it is peace and health. **स्वस्थं शान्तं** - Swastham is staying within oneself and because of that once you are within yourself it is all knowledge, it is all bliss, it is all joy, it is all health, it is all peace etc. The same thing is being reiterated in different terms. **स्वस्थं शान्तं सनिर्वाणम** - it is liberation, peace, and cannot be described in words - akathyam (**अकथ्यं)**. Brahman cannot be described, Atman cannot be described. **अजमजेन ज्ञेयेन** - Ajam Ajena jneyana - it is unborn, it is always there and it knows everything. And that is what your mind becomes one with. Which is the true object knowledge. **सर्वज्ञं परिचक्षत**, **सुखमुत्तमम्** - this kind of joy comes to a Yogi who is experienced Advaita. Once you can reach that state, once you have become one with Atman, these are the natural corollaries that follow. You are at peace,an absolute peace, you are into bliss and there is liberation and you become one with infinite. Why does it happen like this? What is the ultimate truth?

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न कशिचज़्जायते जीवः सम्भवोऽस्य न विद्यते ।
एतत्तदुत्तमं सत्यं यत्र किञ्चिन्न जायते ॥ Karika 48॥

No Jiva is ever born. There does not exist any cause which can produce it. This is the highest Truth that nothing is ever born.

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The last conclusion. No Jiva ever comes and exists. There exists no cause that can produce it. The supreme truth is that nothing ever is born. This is Ajatavada (अजातवाद).

न कशिचज़्जायते जीवः - the soul, the individual being is never born. What you have achieved by knowing Brahman, what you achieved by becoming one with Brahman? Nothing, you achieve nothing. You become Swastham **स्वस्थं** - what you are you have become now. You are established in that now. Why? **सम्भवोऽस्य न विद्यते** - it is just not possible. Because to make something happen, you need to have a cause. There is no cause. Brahman being infinite, that can push Brahman, into becoming something. **एतत्तदुत्तमं सत्यं** - This is the ultimate truth. The ultimate truth is that there is nothing called soul, there is nothing called individual being. There never was any creation. (Ajatavada) . So what are all these that I am seeing? This is pure Brahman. This is what we were discussing from the beginning.

So the conclusion is verse no 48 which is extremely important. Paramasatya, Uttamsatya. What is Param satya ? **न कशिचज़्जायते जीवः** - what we call as individual being me, you he she is whenever born because there is no cause which can make the effect possible. This is the ultimate truth. This is the real truth. No one is ever born, nothing is ever born, that is why this is AjataVad.

Because Brahman is pure existence, there is no force that can change pure existence into relative existence. You might have realised now that this truth is the highest level of truth. It is not meant for everyone. Only a few can take it, Only a few can walk the talk as they say.

So with that ends the third chapter - Advaita Prakarana.

Next we start Alatashanti, the cessation. Because the goal of Mandukya Karika is to help us realise that the phenomenal world does not exist. It is like a ball of fire moving quickly in a circle. If we think that this circle of fire - alata - this has to calm down, this movement has to stop. As the whole thing is moving, it appears as a circle of fire and we are identified with it and we think that this universe of phenomena is real. But no, it isn't real.

Chapter 4

Mandukya Karika - Alata Shanti

42. Stopping the Firebrand - an Introduction.

We are now into the last chapter of Mandukya Karia. This chapter is pretty long and has 100 verses.

Alata means Fire-brand. For example if you take some kind of a flame, maybe a burning stick and move it on a circular path very fast, the fire appears like a circle of fire. Our eyes cannot process fast data and so we see it as a ring of fire. For example if you see a movie reels, they have static pictures only with slight differences of position in the subsequent frame. When this reel is run on a projector at a particular speed, our eye cannot distinguish between the frames and we see a moving picture, a movie cinema. Even present day movies in digital form, also have similar frames.

When I was kid, I learned about this in a text book. I had seen cinema earlier as a kid and it was a matter of great mystery to me. But after that learning all the mystery was lost. And it was such a big disappointment. Way back in the 60s the mystery of moving pictures was lost to me. Not that I stopped watching movies, but it was a great disappointment.

That is exactly what this world is - a place for great disappointments.

You are watching frames but those frames appear like a movie. There is one single flame, it moves so fast that it gives you the appearance of a fire-brand. Alata Shanti means quenching that fire-brand.

And there is worse to follow. As kids you might have played moving in a circle quickly and then you felt that house and everything they were moving around you. But you knew very well that those are fixed and static. We see this world moving but, is this world really moving? Because if this world is really moving then this world must have a reality of its own and existence of its own. And we do have philosophy both in the east and the west who would take this world to be real. Prakriti to be real. But Vedanta does not accept that. So for us the world is fixed and the mind is moving. And it gives you the appearance of the world as moving. Now Vedanta goes one step further. Says, nothing comes, nothing goes, nothing moves. Neither the mind is moving, nor the world is moving, nothing is moving, you are just imagining those things. Imagining where. There is only pure consciousness, there is only Brahman, nothing else. Pure Brahman, pure consciousness. And there you are just imagining things. Mandukya Upanishad and Karika are twins or rather you can say the Upanishad and its explanation are aimed at removing that hypnotism. If you might remember, the first chapter was Agam Prakarana, where the idea was introduced and scriptural statements were used to prove that idea and then came Vaitathya Prakarana where it was shown how what appears as real is in fact false. Those things we have already discussed. We cannot go into it again. The third chapter is Advaita Prakarana. Here lots of arguments were used. But the most important argument that was used by Mandukya Karika to contradict various philosophies was that these philosophies are fighting with each other, contradicting each other. You may not agree with this argument, but for Advata, this is very important. Because Advaita says we have no fight with any one. If a mother has quite a few kids, 4 or 5, kids may be fighting amongst themselves but for mom, they are all her kids. Advaita Vedant does not fight with anybody. It has a place for everybody. It accepts everyone, everything and every philosophy. The problem lies with the Dualists and what Advaita says is that look, since you are fighting amongst yourselves, that shows that you all are wrong. You might say that the same argument can be applied to Advaita also.

But Advaita says this argument cannot be applied to us because something like a person who is intoxicated , standing on the road, and challenges a person on an elephant and says come come , you come forward and I would also take my elephant forward so what would the person on elephant say? He will just laugh and move on. The idea is even if you come challenging Advaita, Advaita will not even respond because he knows that what you are telling is correct.

If you can understand just two very simple things - one is pure consciousness which is infinite and unborn. And there is this world, world means mind. When you are looking at that

pure consciousness through the mind, it is like seeing something through a lens, coloured glass. What you are seeing is not wrong. The only thing is that it is not giving you a complete picture. Actually this statement is extremely simple but hugely profound. When you are looking out of the window, looking at the mountain, you cannot have a complete picture, but the picture that you are seeing is not wrong. Then you move to the next window and from there you see the mountain. It will give you a picture, it will give you a view but that view will also not be complete. Come out of the house and you get a completely different view. Advaita is like removing every possible glasses that might have. Personally the ideas became clear to me only when I understood this mind and consciousness thing. Till you are in the realm of mind everything appears correct because it is your mind, you are trying to see the truth based on your mind. And there are many stories, even Shri Ramakrishna told certain stories to convey the idea. Once you get out of it the picture becomes different, not only that, it also becomes clear why those people have different ideas. And why are those people fighting with each other? You might smell a bit of arrogance in this statement, well, then everyone is arrogant. Even Madhwacharya who founded Dvaita, you can smell arrogance from a distance, the same with Ramanuja and when these allegations are made against Shankaracharya well, what to say?

Naturally the joy of understanding something, for example if you remember your school days, when you were learning something new and suddenly it became clear to you the subject matter, the idea that was being discussed, you suddenly feel so happy. Believe me, there is no happiness greater than the happiness of understanding a subject. If you can grasp an idea, and more importantly if you can come up with a new idea, there can be no joy in all these things of gaining wealth and having married life etc. They pale into nothingness compared to your joy of understanding things.

Now naturally these masters of Dvaita and Vishista Advaita, they are the greatest and we can never aspire to reach that level. It is a fact . But when we are discussing a subject, we are discussing a subject. So the most important argument that Advaita uses is their mutual contradictions. Everyone is contradicting everyone else. That shows that all of them are wrong. Advaita does not contradict anybody. And more importantly that our Guda Pada says in Mandukya Karika that your arguments are based on Rag and Dwesh - attachment and aversion. That means the mind is involved. If the mind is involved in something, how can I trust you?

Moving away from the subject, In Western philosophy you know that great Greek philosophers Aristotle, Plato and there were the dark ages and then many more philosophers came, idealists, realists. There was Spinoza, there was Kant, there was Hegel. Can you trust them? No you cannot. Because wherever they are telling, they tell by the

power of their mind. The mind is always impelled by the twin forces of attachment and aversion. You cannot trust them.

But Indian philosophy is actually not really a philosophy the way western philosophy is. Because we don't apply our mind. Here we apply our mind only to understand what these Sages have explained about the truth beyond the mind. So we don't question the Vedas. The Vedas, the Upanishads are not questioned. These are not philosophies but truth. You can of course interpret Vedas, Upanishads and that could be a philosophy. For example, Sri Ramakrishna did not have any philosophy. How can He have a philosophy? He was just speaking out the truth. You can interpret the words of Sri Ramakrishna which then will become a philosophy, because you are looking at that ultimate truth through your mind. It is a very important point for those who are interested in understanding comparative philosophy. Western Philosophies are a complete work of mind. Indian philosophy is not that. Indian Philosophy assumes the truth. Truths as given by the Vedas and the Upanishads. The Acharyas, the great teachers, the great Sages are just trying to make sense out of it. Because you can't trust your senses completely. Nor can you trust your mind completely. There is a joke about a lawyer, I won't name him, it is a real story. A very famous lawyer, considered to be the greatest lawyer India has ever produced. Once he proved about the constitution that something was to be accepted. This is the truth. Supreme court judges accepted that. After a few years it so happened that the great lawyer had to oppose that. He opposed that. Then the Supreme court judges asked some years ago you said this is the truth. And now you are telling us that it is not the truth, what is your stand. This gentleman simply said I have evolved Sir! But what he meant to say is that when I argue a case, I argue it. If you take that statement I have evolved Sir, can you really trust such minds?

Take the case of the scientists. We know how the idea of blood circulation in the body had evolved the childish idea they had. Why? Because their mind was evolving, their understanding was evolving. In astronomy, everywhere they are evolving. Because certain facts have emerged, and certain facts have come to light, certain facts have been grasped. And you have built your theories and based on that you have seen how new things can be predicted etc.

But that does not happen when you transcend your mind. Those of you who have been into spirituality, those of you who have studied the Upanishad, you will see that all the Upanishads, although they belong to different families, tell the same thing. Sri Ramakrishna who stands as the ultimate authority of all the spiritual truths that India has ever discovered, says everything is true. So what should be the ultimate philosophy of the Vedas or the Upanishads? What is the ultimate philosophy of India? It is Advaita. And by Advaita we mean Vedanta. Because Vedanta is a better word compared to Advaita to understand the idea. Sometimes people think that Advaita means only that oneness. But it is not so. Advaita

takes in dualists that is Dvaita, Vishista Advaita, Shuddha Dvaita, all the Dvaita within it. Swami Vivekanada often used the word Vedanta for that. But actually it is Advaita Vedanta only.

It is very important to understand this section - the last chapter - Alata Shanti.

The first chapter first was Agama Prakaran - scripture, second was Vaitathya Prakaran - falsehood, third was Advaita and now begins Alata Shanti - quenching the fire brand.

Now when it is presenting the arguments, the moment we talk about arguments -, it is some kind of inference. To remind you there are different kinds of methods of knowledge. The first one is direct - the knowledge that we get through our senses. The second one is inference - inference is the logical outcome of something.

Now when it comes to inference,they say that there are two kinds of inferences. First is very common - deductive. When one thing leads to the other. The other one is inductive; here they have a different thing called Vyatireki. It is practically inductive but it takes a different approach. Here If you see the absence of one, it proves the other, Those of you who have some idea of Mathematics- there is a very important tool for proving something which is known as theory of negation. You want to prove something, You don't prove it but show that the opposite of it is not possible. When you prove that the opposite of it is not possible, then automatically it is proved that the opposite of this is possible. These are arguments and our Naya Philosophy of India and western philosophy where there is logic, they took it to great heights. Here they will be mostly using the second one. Absence of one proves the presence of the other. With this we shall move to slokas of the Alata Shanti.

43. Why the realists are wrong

We start with the first verse of Alata Shanti, the fourth chapter of Mandukya Karika.

Verse no 1 and verse 2 are dedicated to making Pranams, bowing down, to do Namaskar. In India we show reverence by doing Pranams, bowing down, doing Namaskar. This is India’s tradition. We take every opportunity to bow down before some whom we respect – elders. scholarly people and Sages, saints and monks. One always browns down before his Guru, even if the Guru is younger in age. And we always bow down before sannyasis. Because we feel they are manifestations of God. This is Indian culture. It is only when in the most common relation, when everything else is common, and people belong to the same class that seniority really matters. For example when it comes to your family members or in an organisation seniority matters. We show reverence by bowing down and touching feet, or just by folding hands and saying Namaskar. We make namaskar not only just to persons, but also to deities, Idols, pictures of God, to Rivers, to Mountains. For example, I am here at

Belur Math, and stay at the university campus. Every morning I go to the temple and do pranam to Thakur, Sri Ramakrishna, and then go to the banks of Ganga and do pranam to the river. I do this every morning. So, we show our respect and reverence by bowing down before anything that we consider respectful or reverential. This is true of Vidya also. People who work with machines, they make pranam to their machines. I have seen drivers sitting in the driver's seat in a bus or in trucks,in cars too and making pranams to the steering wheel. From that moment onward the life of the driver and of all the passengers are entirely on the machine and we believe the presence of divinity behind everything. Even behind machines, vehicles and everything. This is something unique to India.

Nowadays when you find people with strange notions, ill-informed people. They have forgotten our culture of humility. Humility is not weakness. Humility is born of strength, we see God everywhere, we see the presence of divinity behind everything and this is important to us. Something on which our life depends and most importantly something on which my growth depends, we bow down before that. It may be a person, it may be an object, it may be an ideal. For example you find military people saluting the flag. When people make a mockery of the Hindus, why do you make pranams to an idol, why do you salute the flag? Saluting a flag does not mean you are saluting a piece of cloth. You are saluting an ideal. When we bow down before some Deity, the Deity in whom we feel the presence of Divinity very strongly, what is objectionable in it? Once I was talking to a Communist friend of mine and I have a lot of Communist friends. I said that you have an objection bowing down before Vigraha. (The right words for the idol or statue is Vigraha. To us it is not a statue. It is Vigraha. It has, in it, the living presence of God .)

So I said but you yourself go before the statue of your leaders and you make salutes there, in your typical Communist style. Don't you have any issue with that? He said, he is offering respect. I said that is what I am also doing. See, the problem is that all over the world what I do is correct, what you do is the same thing but find practices of others as abominable.

In these verses, Gaudapada is bowing down before two - Vidya i.e., , the subject matter, the knowledge and to the giver of that knowledge. Who is the giver of that knowledge that is God himself, brahman. Here knowledge is that which liberates you. There is a very beautiful saying - सा विद्या या विमुक्तये - Sa vidya ya vimuktaye" which translates to “That knowledge which leads to liberation". Knowledge liberates. Whenever there is a war, sometimes some soldiers are captured and his comrades come to liberate him. We hear about society like Communists, they are trying to liberate the society. So those who are our liberators, we are grateful to them. Here is the knowledge that has come to liberate us. Liberate us from all our wants, our physical wants, our emotional wants,our mental wants and from the wants of births, higher births. How do they do it? Just by showing who we truly are. We bow down

before our benefactors. Any beneficiary is eternally indebted to the benefactor. We are indebted to our liberators. Those who liberate us from poverty, those who liberate us from ignorance, those who liberate us from diseases. We respect them. The whole concept of the Nobel prize is behind this that there are people who liberated people from certain kinds of ignorance. Alfred Nobel did not install any nobel prize for mathematics. Probably mathematics does not liberate anybody, I really don't know. But he has prizes for Physics, Chemistry and Biology etc.. And this knowledge liberates us.

So Sage Gaudapada bows down before this knowledge and the originator of the knowledge is God Himself, Brahman. And this God, Narayana, is addressed as Dwipadambara, who has two names, or literally it means one who is known by two names - Nara & Narayana. Those of you who have been to Badrika Ashram, would know that we have Badrinath there. Also we have our sacred stories of ancient times known as Purana, translated in English as mythology. But mythology in English is something else and the Puranic stories of India are something entirely different. So, we have that God himself manifests as Nara and Narayana, two great Sages, they meditate, originally they meditated in Badrika Ashram, and there are stories in Mahabharata when Nara and Narayana have meditated at other places too. In our own times, Sri Ramakrishna has very clearly mentioned, Swami Vivekananda was that same Nara Rishi and indirectly he mentioned himself as Narayana. So when Nara and Narayana, these two, the real benefactors of human society, come in their physical manifestation, they give us knowledge. And when they are meditating they keep the human society afloat by the power of their meditation. Great Saint Gaudapada is offering his Namaskar, he is bowing down. Remember, when we say Bowing down in English and Namaskar in Sanskrit, these are not fully equivalent. But those of you who have some idea about Indian traditions, would understand it pretty well. So with that we begin the verses.

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ज्ञानेनाऽऽकाशकल्पेन धर्मान्यो गगनोपमान् ।
ज्ञेयाभिन्नेन सम्बुद्धस्तं वन्दे द्विपदां वरम् ॥ Karika 1॥

I bow to the best among men who by means of knowledge, which is like Akasa and non-different from the objects of knowledge (i.e. Dharma), realised the nature of the Dharmas (i,e, the Jivas) which are again , like the Akasa

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First he bows down before God. Narayana –Purushottam. They are all one and the same. He says, I bow down before God who is Dwipadamabara (**द्विपदां वर**) who is known by two words Nara and Narayana - Basically God. Because God is one with knowledge, knowledge that liberates. You may remember that Brahman and Knowledge of Brahman are one and the same thing. Say those of you, who are not accustomed to this Advaita, those of you who are conditioned by your learning in the world, for them it might be slightly difficult to grasp

this idea, that knower, the knowledge and the known are one. When I take up this pen, pen is an object, I am the subject, I am the knower, pen is the known and the link between me and this pen is knowledge. For the dualists, God is something, I am something and my devotion, my knowledge of God is the linking factor between me and God. But in higher devotion, In higher Bhakti, in every religion, it is not the legacy of only Hindu religion, but you find in other religions too, a devotee, devotion and the object of devotion, i.e. God, become one. They are one and the same thing. However in Advaita, when you are studying traditional Jnana, there cannot be the slightest of duality. We cannot even imagine duality. When you are practicing devotion initially you start with the idea of duality. When you are practicing devotion, you know that you are different from your Ishta –God. God is different, you are different. But if you study Bhakti literature, you will realise that as you progress, you start feeling a very strong bond with God, and a time comes when you become one with God, and then you realise that you, your devotion and your Ishta i,e object of worship, are one and the same.

However, in Jnana Yog, that is what we are studying as Advaita, it begins with non-duality, it continues with non-duality and ends with non-dualism. Your very form of Sadhana, your very form of meditation is non-dual. You say that anything that belongs to duality has to be shunned. Aham Brahmasmi, I am Brahman. Any thought that takes me away from that highest ideal of Aham Brahmasmi, is to be shunned. We have already discussed these things earlier.

Gaudapada says that God has given us this knowledge of non-duality. More technically it is known as Asparsha Yog, which we discussed earlier. The knowledge which is like Akasa, and Akasa is space. So I bow to the best among men, who by means of knowledge, which is like Akasa, (Akasa is space) which is non-different from the goal of knowledge. Knowledge and goal of Knowledge, that is God they are one and same. They realised the nature of Jiva (Dharma), which too is like Akasa. I may go on saying that I am Brahman, I am Atman, but actually I am not. Now I am trapped. Now when I am trapped, knowledge can free me.

So, the writer, Gaudapada says, I bow down before Sage NaraNarayan. Says that Nara Narayan they are the persons who understood the nature of Jivatma, the embodied soul and they are the knower of Atman, the true self. They have known that Jivatma and Paramatma are one and the same.

The tradition of Advaita is now traced back to NaraNarayan from whom it came to Vyasa, from where it came further down to Gaudapada and finally to Shankaracharya and then tradition continued. This knowledge comes from Brahman, God. In India unless the knowledge has come from God, nobody respects. If you say that I have thought it, our people don't respect you. During your lifetime and if one is surrounded by a very powerful religious mafia, one might be respected, but not after one passes away. You might have

seen saints and sages who are respected but once they are gone slowly it tapers away. Knowledge of Advaita comes from Brahman and so ever true.

Now we move to the second verse. This is also Namaskaram, bowing down.

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अस्पर्शयोगो वै नाम सर्वसत्त्वसुखो हितः ।

अविवादोऽविरुद्धश्च देशितस्तं नमाम्यहम् ॥ Karika 2॥

I salute this Yog known as Asparsa (i.e.free from all touch which implies duality) taught through scripture – the Yog which promotes the happiness of all beings and conduces to the well-being of all and which is free from strife and contradictions.

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From the twin sages Nara Narayan came Asparsa Yog. There are many kinds of Yog, – Raja Yog, Jnana Yog, Bhakti Yog and Gita talks about eighteen Yogs. Mandukya Karika talks of Asparsa Yog. Sparsh means touch, Asparsh means untouch. Yog of the untouched. We had earlier discussed this Yog of the untouched as well.

I bow to the Yog known as Asparsha, taught in the scriptures, that is the Upanishads, which promotes the happiness and well being of all creatures. So it is not that Advaita is meant only for the chosen few. When you want to understand it theoretically it might be for a chosen few. But actually it is meant for all, because it is for the well being of all. It is free from strife in the sense that there are no contradictions, arguments and counter arguments. There is no strife, no contradictions. **अस्पर्शयोगो वै नाम सर्वसत्त्वसुखो हितः** - it gives joy to everybody, it is for the benefit of everyone and it has no contradiction with anybody, it has no strife to conflict. Neither there is any conflict, nor is there any contradiction. Acharya Shankar explains that Asparash Yog, Knowledge of Atman, is of the nature of Brahman, Pure consciousness. Here we are trying to focus only on pure consciousness, nothing less than that . It is good for everyone. He gives the example that sometimes people perform austerities. In India practice of austerity was very common, and you find it in the Jain community even now. And when Prince Siddharth was performing Tapasya he was doing extreme austerities. When he came out of it, he became Lord Buddha. So the journey from Prince Siddharth to Bhagaban Buddha was through austerities.

Acharya Shanlar says Austerity is extremely painful, makes you miserable, creates too much pain, but its end result is good. But in the case of Asparsha Yog, its beginning is good, its middle is good, and its end is good. And sometimes we find that there are things which we love. But they are not good for us. For example there are people who like to drink wine, they love it. But they know that it is not good for their health. There are people who smoke. They love it, knowing very well that it is not good for health. Asparsha Yog is not like that. It is good and it brings you wellbeing. It does not hurt in any way, either in the beginning, or in the middle or in the end, because its nature does not change.

When the nature changes, something enters our system, something enters our body, something enters our mind. Once it goes inside its effect is different. So its nature has changed. Think of poison mixed in milk. Taking milk is pleasing but actually its nature changes the moment it enters your system. Knowledge of Vedanta, knowledge or Advaita is not like that. Its nature remains the same throughout. When you begin with it, when you continue with it, and when you reach the destination, you find the nature has been uniform throughout. It has no conflict. Earlier also we had mentioned how it has no conflict. And we will see here again, it doesn't get into contradicting others.

Let me recall a story that Sri Ramakrishna used to tell. There was a chameleon and as you know they change their colour. Somebody has seen the chameleon and he came and said the chameleon is green in colour. Somebody said no it is red. Etc etc. and there was a quarrel among them. Then somebody came and said that I live under that tree and I know that it can take all the colours. Sri Ramakrishna narrated the story in relation to different religions, but that story is most suited for this verse and the discussion that follows. Will see how Karika takes up different philosophies and it shows how two philosophies with near similar views contradict each other, implying that something is missing from both of them. Arguments are very simple.

Gaudapada now bows down before this knowledge. **देशितस्तं नमाम्यहम्** - says I bow down before this knowledge. So there are two points, before God, Nara Narayan, who initiated this knowledge and second is this knowledge itself. And its quality is pleasing, it is good for all, it brings well-being for all, it has no conflict with anyone, does not contradict anybody. You know that when Swamiji went to the world parliament of religions, that was held at Chicago on 11th September, 1893, he gave his famous speech, “Sisters and Brothers of America”, and then he said, conflict has to go away, there has to be universal religion. And it should not only be tolerance, but also acceptance. The biggest problem of the world today is not religion, but religious intolerance. And as has been seen in society, the people who are most intolerant always play the victim card. That way they harm society both ways. On the one hand they are intolerant and on the other hand they play the victim card. Vedanta is not like that. Vedanta accepts all. You all are perfect

Sri Ramakrishna had beautifully said , Oh! Mother, everybody thinks my watch is running right. Christian, Brahmo, Hindu, muslim, everybody says my religion is correct, but mother, nobody's watch is running right. Who will understand you?

Dear listeners, if you think that a particular religion is wrong, this is something that I have understood as truth, being in this area of study, being with religion, do you believe that religion takes you to God? That would be my first question to everyone. Everyone who says that he or she follows religion, do you really believe that your religion takes you to God? If

you say Yes, and you think that your God is all powerful and infinite, well then your God won't need you to set me right. Your God will set me right. Why are you worried about it? This is something that people who are intolerant do not understand. This is what Dualists, who we have in fairly large numbers in India, don't like to understand. I was shocked to hear that in South India, particularly in Tamil Nadu the conflict between Shaivites and Vaishnavites has been terribly bad and it has come up to Karnataka. I have not grown up in an atmosphere of intolerance, so I found it extremely shocking. Things must have changed maybe in the last 30, 40 or 100 years but earlier it was very bad. And it continues to be bad. In fact one of my very good friends, who is an extremely learned person and a highly respected member of the society, belonging to a particular sect, used such foul words about the other sect that I was left stunned. I couldn't believe it. So you can imagine what would happen if a particular religion or particular sect's main text, the holy book itself proclaims intolerance. When religions fight and when their main holy books are exhorting their devotees to go out and attack and kill, you can imagine what can be the situation!
Vedanta is not like that. Vedanta is continuously telling that there is a place for everybody. India is the land of Vedanta. Vedanta is the true religion of India. Hinduism is Vedanta. When we speak of sects in India, sect is your personal choice, you have chosen that particular path to tread to reach God. But when it comes to religion, Vedanta is our religion, Hinduism is our religion. Hinduism and Vedanta are one and the same. And it has a place for an infinite number of sects, consequently it has a place for an infinite number of religions in the world. We have no quarrel with anybody, we can never have any quarrel with anybody.

अविवादोऽविरुद्धश्च - AvivadoAbiruddhashcha - Neither we have any conflict, and nor we have any contradiction. Neither any strife nor contradiction. But the dualists keep on contradicting each other. They are continuously under conflict. Fighting with each other. On to verse 3.

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भूतस्य जातिमिच्छन्ति वादिनः केचिदेव हि ।

अभूतस्यापरे धीरा विवदन्तः परस्परम् ॥ Karika 3॥

Quarrelling among themselves, some disputants postulate that an existing entity undergoes evolution, whereas other disputants, proud of their understanding, maintain that evolution proceeds from a non-existing entity

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Now here we are not discussing other religions. What we are discussing is different philosophies. To remind you, India has six major philosophies based on the Vedas. We have discussed it many times that Vedas are the knowledge bank of India. And being the knowledge bank these are treated ultimately sacred. The Veda when in book form come in four Rig Veda, Sam Veda, Yajur Veda and Atharva Veda. To find out what exactly the Vedas meant to say, what is the path, the Darshan and there are six philosophies.. And these six

philosophies have different approaches. Of these Samkhya Yog, and Naya and Vaisheshika are known as realists. This discussion centers around the realists.

According to the realists, creation is real. The pen that I see here, the pen that I hold here is real, microphone is real and I am real. When I say I am real, when I say that the pen is real, based on Sankhya Yog, Naya, Vaisheshika, we mean to say that the existence of each one of these is independent of each other. So the pen has an independent existence, and microphone has an independent existence and I have an independent existence. So my existence came into being. This is an important thing. MY (My is capitals) existence came into being.

Put very simply, there are different systems of thought that explain the reality of things. Here is this pen, and we admit that pen has an existence, no one can doubt it. Because if you doubt the existence of this pen, there is something seriously wrong with your head. Now how do you explain the existence of this pen? Where did it come from? You may say it came from a shop. And there it came from a factory and manufacturing, Arrangement of molecules, materials. You can go backwards.

However when it comes to being an object, finding an individuality, is it real? Samkhya, Naya and Vaisheshika will say it is real. That is why they are known as realists. Now realists are of two kinds. First one is known as SatkaryaVada. SatkaryaVada means the effect was always there in the cause. Samkhya and Yog belong to this.

And the second one is ParinamaVada where the effect has come out of the cause. Think of say mustard and oil. Mustard is the cause and oil is the effect. According to SatkaryaVada, oil was already in the mustard. Some effort was made and mustard changed into oil. So nothing new was produced. It was already there in the mustard.

But what about a pot that is shaped out of clay. Effort made by the potter and with certain tools used the pot that was already existing in the clay just came out. There is a famous statement made by Maichael Angelo. He made a beautiful statue and said that the statue was already there in the stone, I just chipped away the excess. Sounds pretty interesting.

As opposed to SatkaryaVada, ParinamaVada says that cause and effect are two different things, because if they were the same, then effect could have been easily pushed back to the cause. For example mustard oil cannot be pushed back to be mustard seeds and the pot cannot be converted into clay. Sankhya will say yes, there are ways to do it and they will get down to the use of Mantra etc. by the power of mantra it can be done. The bottom line is there is A and there is B. B is coming out of A. mustard and oil. Since A is A and B is B, B can never be produced from A. Then you will say that what if we have an element C. A+C=B. Like Mustard + crushing=Oil. (A+C makes B)? The argument says that look, C does not exist in A. Crushing machine does not exist in Mustard. So you cannot say that B has come out of A. That is B and A are not the same but two different entities. So mustard is a

different entity and oil is a different entity. It means ParinamaVada, where cause and effect are different.

Now this leads to some very interesting arguments. Here is Atman, Atman is something which is never produced, Ataman is never caused. So, how do you explain Atman? And can Atman produce something? If you think deeper you will find that ParinamaVada and SatkaryaVada, that is Naya, Vaisheshika and Samkhya, are not only at odds with each other, they are contradicting each other. And when they are contradicting each other, something is missing out. The essence of the thing is missing out. Vedanta catches them exactly there and says it is neither SatkaryaVada nor ParinamaVada, it is VivartaVada. Vivarta means thy effect is neither the cause, nor any independent thing, it is just an apparent reality. It has a reality of its own. That way Vedanta is similar to Naya and yet is non-different from the cause. Because Atman alone exists; it is similar to Samkhya. Vedanta is not a thought out system, it is a reality that was perceived by the sages and was mentioned by Narayana, came from God, and came through the tradition of the greatest of the sages. So you find that both Naya and Samkhya, the extremes of realists, get accommodated beautifully in the idealism of Vedanta. The ultimate realisation, you see in the western philosophical system realists and idealists continue to fight even today. Vedanta is the ultimate of idealism and beautifully accommodates the arch opponents realists and Samkhya and Naya, they are not only opponents of Vedanta, they are also opponents of each other.

Vedanta says we have no fight with any one of you. Parinam says, effect is different from cause. We also say that yes, they are different. No doubt about it. But there is no creation, it is an apparent reality. Because it is an apparent reality, so it is the same with the cause, Atman alone exists. Everything else is just an imagination. In the absolute sense only Atman remains, in the relative sense they are all different. And that is why we have no issues with Naya, no issues with Samkhya, no issues with any other system, because when you look at things there is ocean and there are the waves; Swami Vivekananda repeatedly uses this in his inspired talks and throughout his works. When you look at the waves, you don't look at the ocean, when you are looking at the ocean you don't look at the waves. These two, ocean and waves, are they really different? No, they are not different. The problem is when you see the waves, you don't see the ocean, when you see the ocean, you don't see the waves. Some of you might be finding it a bit intricate and subtle. Actually it is not. If you think a little deeper, you will understand that there is no difference as such. Verse no 3 says that different philosophical systems are fighting with each other and some disputants postulate that only existing entity can again come into existence like mustard becoming oil, while other disputants, proud of their intellect, postulate that only a non existing entity - oil - was non-existing entity and it has come out of the mustard, can come into existence, thus they

quarrel among themselves. The two most powerful schools of realists Naya and Samkhya, they fight.Samkhya says that effect was already in the cause, naya says effect is a new product. Gaudapada says that these people keep fighting with each other and not only do they fight, they want to be victorious.

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भूतं न जायते किंचिदभूतं नैव जायते ।

विवदन्तोऽद्वया ह्येवमजातिं ख्यापयन्ति ते ॥ Karika 4॥

The existent cannot (again) pass into (birth) existence. Nor can the non-existent be born or come into being as existent. Thus disputing among themselves, they, as a matter of fact tend to establish the Advaita view and support the Ajati or the absolute non-evolution (of what exists).

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Gaudapada is telling that they used different arguments. That an existing entity cannot again come into existence. If a thing is already there, how can it come again? Nor can a non-existent entity come into existence. Something which is non-existent, like the son of a barren woman. A barren woman cannot have a son. You can have an adopted son, but not a son. If she has a son, she is not barren.

These are the arguments and I tell you will go crazy, you will go mad if you study any of these systems. It just drives you crazy. Philosophy just drives you crazy, in the name of finding out the truth.They say that they are in search of truth, their arguments become so subtle that we cannot even grasp it. Thus disputing among themselves, they really establish the non-dualistic view of Ajati, non-creation. This verse no 4 is beautiful.

They say when Samkhya and Naya, Samkhya telling the effect is in the cause, and Nyaya telling that effect is something new, effect is different from the cause and they are fighting, giving arguments against each other. Says in reality when they are fighting, using arguments against each other they are only giving credence to Ajati. There never was any creation. A says B is wrong because of these reasons. B says A is wrong because of these reasons. So you have contradicted each other. If effect indeed was in the cause then Naya would not have contradicted it. Which shows that Samkhya is wrong. Again Samkhya is contradicting Naya, effect is not something new, Naya says effect is something new. That means you have contradicted yourself. So what is the ultimate thing? There never was creation. Because if there is creation either effect will be one with the cause or effect will not be one with the cause. Now when you are contradicting, when you are using arguments of a higher level, it only shows that he is wrong and the other one is also wrong. Because you are showing how each one of you is wrong.

However when you take into account this Asparsha Yog, there never was any creation. Creation the way we understand. Very often people confuse Vedanta with ShunyaVada of Buddhists. Buddhists are a totally confused lot. Totally confused. Now when Buddhists talk about Ksanika VijnanaVada and Shunya Vada, when they talk about momentary

consciousness, whatever that might mean. Says that it's all a dream, it is all an idea, it is not that. Vedanta never says that pen does not exist. It says that the pen fully exists. As fully workable, it is extremely useful. Just that in reality it is only pure Atman. This we have been discussing from the beginning. Here it concludes, that if pen has an ultimate reality, true reality, whether it be with the cause or be an independent thing then arguments could not be used against them and since arguments have been used contradicting each other, demolishing each other that only proves that it does not have a separate independent existence.

44. Prakriti, the nature

We have discussed verse 4 of Alata Shanti - cessation of the fire circle. Now if we just go verse by verse, it may be a bit difficult to understand. So, I am giving you a complete picture first, so that it becomes easy to grasp.

What is Mandukya Karika all about? Mandukya is about knowing that Brahman alone exists, consciousness alone exists. But what about the multiplicity that we see all around us? What about the world and the universe and all these huge things that we see? Mandukya Karika says that these things are unreal. It is not a dream. It is just a state. Is it all Shunya as Buddhists say? It is not so. The problem with Buddhists is when they say it is all Shunya, they remove consciousness too. Mandukya Karika does not do that. It accepts Brahman to be the truth and to be the only truth. Nothing else exists.

But what about this existence, the multiplicity that we see all around us? Mandukya Karika takes up verses from Mandukya Upanishad, then brings up different philosophies and the entire thought is brought on one single platform. Mandukya Karika says that it is AjataVada, there never was any creation, the way we understand. God exists in the beginning, God exists in the middle and God will continue to exist in the end. There is only one existence and that is God. But this is absolutely counter-intuitive. When we say something counter-intuitive, it means that we don't want to accept it. Those of you who are familiar with the story of science, whenever a scientist, in whatever field came up with some new discovery, other scientists did not want to accept that. Because, they felt it to be counterintuitive. To tell you a very simple thing, today we know whether an object is heavy or less heavy because of gravitation. The effect of gravitational pull is the same on both of them. But at the time of Galileo, when Galileo came up with this idea, his brother scientists did not want to accept it. It is such a simple thing. Today what appears as simple and normal there was a time when it sounded absolute trash, because it appeared to be counter-intuitive. And then we developed our minds, we developed our brains and it came within the realm of our knowledge.

What is counter-intuitive about Mandukya Karika? It is that Mandukya Karika says God alone exists, nothing else exists. But we see things but we don't see God. Mandukya Karika is saying that God alone exists, Brahman alone exists. It says things you feel, things you experience do not exist in reality.

So after all the discussions we had earlier, now we are coming to the present verses. And what it does is, it simply takes the theory of cause and effect. Let us understand what exactly the theory of cause and effect is and how it affects philosophy. Theory of cause and effect is the most common thing that we experience since our birth. A baby, a newborn baby feels hungry and pangs of hunger makes it cry. The baby does not think about it. It is instinctive that the neuromotor is fixed in such a way that the baby will cry and the baby is fed. And slowly it learns that whenever you cry you get what you want. And we continue with that learning that intuition throughout our life. Even in the case of nations, when the nations want to do something they will start crying or they will be throwing tantrums. Actually tantrums are only a form of crying. So, when you find some powerful country, let us not name them, when they keep screaming that this part of the world, that part of the world is theirs, etc etc., they are actually doing the same thing that a baby does. Crying for food is an instinctive thing which slowly gets converted into a habit. And then you make a conscious effort of it. You must have come across people who keep on cribbing, keep on complaining all the time, because that is what they have learnt since their childhood, since their birth. As we grow we realise that when we take something sweet, something sugary, it is sweet. If you take chilly, your mouth burns. So there is a very close relationship between cause and effect.

Knowledge, the way we understand, has been imparted to us from two different sources. One is from the philosophers and the second is from the scientists. If you go to the time of Greeks, during the time of Greeks, philosophers and scientists seem to be the same persons like Pythagoras, Aristotle. They were philosophers and they also dabbled in science and mathematics. However, some of the ideas by these philosophers were not based on cause and effect and cannot be said to be based on science, because science is everything about cause and effect. You see an effect and from that you make a theory, and from that theory you make predictions and then see if the new things, the new effects comply with your theory. This is science. Whatever, whether that be in Biology, or be in Chemistry that be in physics, whatever, this applies. Even in Economics, the Economists see the movement of the market dynamics of the market and they make a theory or a hypothesis. And from there they come up with predictions. They say the market will behave this way, society will behave in this way etc. And then after some time it is found that it does not work. But by then, on a lighter note, they might have taken a Nobel prize.

Ancient Greek philosopher scientists gave us many scientific ideas. Some of those principles still hold true, Archimedes' principle and Pythagoras theorem. They also gave us ideas about

Atoms, which continued to hold till the 20th century when Atoms were broken apart. Then Greeks were conquered by the Romans and they also decayed. And then began the dark ages of Europe. The famous dark ages, which continued practically up to the 15th, 16th century. Advent of Jesus brought total darkness in their land. Whereas an Incarnation should bring enlightenment, it brought darkness! That is why Europeans are extremely wary of Religion, because religion gives them darkness.

Now during that period, the Arab world was in glory, as far as learning was concerned. There were Philosophers, there were Mathematicians, there were Physicists, there were thinkers. In India by then Shankaracharya had already gone and other Philosophers were fighting over the meaning of a particular word, a particular statement or what would be the correct meaning of this preceding statement. The followers of Shankaracharya, and Ramanuja and Madhwacharya were fighting with each other. The Arab world at that time was making rapid strides in the fields of knowledge. One of them was Al Hasan Ali. Europeans called him Al Hassan. He discovered the concept of the pinhole camera. You might have studied pinhole cameras like if there is a dark box and if there is a pin hole, you find an inverted image which is in the light. And from that he concluded that the eye itself is a lens. He used a bull's eye to prove his point. He took a bull's eye, cleaned it up and showed how the eye was creating the image. The rest is history.

The Greeks had this idea that there is consciousness, there is knowledge and it comes out through our eyes. We accept that in Vedanta and that it goes out and grasps the objects. This is what we believe, we firmly believe.

But Al-Hassan changed everything and when his works were later translated into Latin and finally went to Europe, this was one of the major discoveries that played a very important role in the development of science in Europe. What is important about this discovery by Al Hassan is that my body, my whole body is a product of cause and effect. So there is light and here is my eye which is like a lens. Light enters and the way there is image formation in a pinhole camera, just like that there is an image formation etc.. And from there it was later taken up by French philosophers who became the real realists, objectivists and the idea of cause and effect, seeing is believing, this cause will produce that effect etc became more established. So the whole of Science today is about cause and effect. You see an effect from that you derive a theory that will explain the relationship between cause and effect. You check it with more and more effects and if you find that something is not fitting, then you discard the theory and come up with a better theory. It is so simple but is it that simple really?

If you follow cause and effect perfectly, you can't even play cricket. If you follow cause and effect perfectly, you can't even play football. You can't play chess. To give you a very crude example, a batsman hits a ball and the ball goes flying; when a fielder looks at the ball he

looks at it at some point and there are thousand of things working, he himself is running, ball is flying, there is wind speed and this and that and yet the bowler judges correctly where the ball will land and he takes a catch. Can the fielders, particularly the fielders, who are near the batsman, really calculate the entire thing? How fast the ball is moving, where the ball will be etc.?They cannot really. When a shooter shoots a flying bird, does he calculate the speed of the bird, its direction relative to him etc? He doesn't. Yet a skilled shooter shoots down the bird. How and why is this possible? It is all because the brain is an excellent predictive machine. The brain does not calculate, rather the brain simply does not store information but also uses it to predict. The brain is actually a great predictive machine. It goes on creating a world and the world that it creates, it instructs our different organs to act accordingly. The world that the brain creates, the objects in that world follow exactly the same rule that those objects follow in the outside world. So how much is cause and effect correct? Well, those of you know something about subatomic physics would know that the laws of cause and effect fail miserably. If you talk to any of the nuclear physicists, they will tell you the world is not what it appears to be. The world is quantum. The whole world is made up of certain subatomic particles about which most of us have no idea. When we were in school we thought of electrons, protons, neutrons, now they talk about quarks etc.. So, the world is made up of entirely different things whose rules we don't even understand. It is only the physicists who understand. That much about Physics and Philosophy. But how really does it affect us?

It affects us in two ways. When it comes to Indian Philosophy, it can be classified into two groups as discussed in the last discussion. Whatever the effect is either it is real or it is not real. According to Samkhya Philosophy what is produced was already there in the cause. According to Nayaiks, who also believe in cause and effect, whatever came out was not there in the cause. This we have already discussed. Thus essentially you have two different cause and effect. One says that what came out was already there, that means it was Sat, it was already there another one says, what came out was Asat, that which was not existing earlier. Vedanta attacks cause effect theory exactly at this point. People who say real is born, then that means, real which was existing, changes and something new comes out. Other option is unreal was there and unreal is born. That means either real is born or unreal is born. People who say real is born, then real which was existing and something new comes out. Other option is unreal was there and unreal is born. That means either real is born or unreal is born.

Those who follow the "real is born" philosophy contradict "unreal is born" philosophers. And "unreal is born" philosophers, like Nayaiks,they contradict Samkhya or "real is born" philosophers, that is Sat. From here Vedanta takes over and says look, by contradicting each other you are contradicting the birth of Sat and another one is contradicting the birth of

Asat. To remind you, the birth of Sat means that the thing was already there. For example when oil is produced from seed, according to Samkhya oil was already there. And according to Nayaikas oil is a new product. This point was discussed in detail in the earlier discussion. Vedanta says, by contradicting the birth of Sat and contradicting the birth of asat, you are basically telling that neither sat can be born, nor asat can be born. So essentially what you are telling is that there is no birth. You cannot have any third possibility. So,whenever something new comes, either it is sat or asat, there is no third possibility. Either it was already in the cause or it was not in the cause. There is no third possibility.

The third possibility is what Vedanta says. Vedanta says there has never been any birth. You may continue to contradict each other. We have no quarrel with either of you and are not taking any side as we have no issues. We believe that there never was any birth. So there is no question of Sat being born, there is no question Asat being born. Both of you are right and both of you are wrong.

Atman cannot undergo any transformation. Brahman cannot undergo any transformation. So, there can neither be the birth of the real nor can there be any birth of the unreal. That is all. With this Vedanta is cutting at the root of the theory of cause and effect.

So is Vedanta unscientific? Not at all. Rather, it is more than science. Cause and effect is a product of your mind. Why is it a product of your mind? Because a functional mind has a brain. And the brain is essentially a predictive machine. And a predictive machine will always work on the principle of cause and effect. And that is why you think that there is cause and effect in this world. Whatever science has to say, whatever anybody has to say essentially you are talking about cause and effect. But remember it, cause and effect itself is a product of the brain, and not of mind. The mind does not work on cause and effect. The brain being a predictive machine, the mind creates its own reality.

I will give you a simple example. It is said that when men walk, they first put forward their left foot. And women start walking by putting their right foot first. I know, I put my left foot first. Whenever I walk inside the university, I would like to put my left foot first on the stairs leading to our building. But it is very surprising, that while walking in from the gate, my steps automatically adjust its lengths in such a way that I put my left foot first on the stairs. But there is no measurement. But it always happens. Sometimes if I am unmindful, my right foot may come but that is rare. You might have seen. Cricket bowlers, long Jumpers, High jumpers, all measure their run so that the final step is in the right place. But I don't calculate, I don't measure, yet every time this happens. It is all because the brain is a predictive machine. It knows my preference and calculates in advance. Sometimes, while reading, if there is a printing mistake, people just do not fail to understand what should be the right word and reads without any problem.

I am an exceptionally bad proofreader. I worked in Prabuddha magazine of our Ramakrishna Mission for many years and I was considered to be an extremely unreliable proofreader, because I am a very fast reader. I can read books very fast, though not a technical book. I can read a page in less than 30-35 seconds. In fact that is a very slow speed compared to masters. Consequently I don't read every word, I don't read every sentence, I know what is there. Because my brain predicts. As a consequence, if there is any mistake, if there is a printing mistake in a word I skip over it. So if you give me something to read and make corrections I will read it so fast that mistakes will remain. So the brain predicts. And I can tell the content easily even if I have not read every word. All because the brain is a predictive machine.

Vedanta says that what you are talking about is cause and effect, either the effect is real, that means it was already there or it is unreal, and you are contradicting each other. Because anything whatever is there in this universe, will not change its nature, Atman can never change its nature.

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ख्याप्यमानामजातिं तैरनुमोदामहे वयम् ।
विवदामो न तैः सार्धमविवादं निबोधत ॥ Karika 5॥

We approve the Ajati or non-creation declared by them. We do not quarrel with them. Now hear from us (the ultimate reality) which is free from all disputations

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People who are talking about cause and effect and contradicting each other are unconsciously and unknowingly agreeing to AjataVada. Because those who believe in creation as being real, contradict those who say that new things are created. Similarly those who believe that Asat is produced, unreal is produced unknowingly they are contradicting each other and they are accepting that there is no creation. By unreal it is meant that something that was not there earlier. Because had there been creation, there would have been unanimity. Vedanta says we have no objection, we fully accept it. Whatever you are seeing as cause effect etc are all products of mind and we have no objection to that. But as far as Atman is concerned, Brahman is concerned, there cannot be any creation as the arguments will show. Shankaracharya adheres to all that there is in the text, till you accept that Brahman cannot undergo any change. So what are all these changes? This is maya. There is no change and yet you see change. There is no transformation , yet you see transformation. This is maya. Sri Ramakrishna, has very beautifully explained that there was a king and he wanted to understand what Advaita is. And there was a magician, he came and he started moving his fingers, just moving and nothing else. And suddenly it was found that there was a whole army and there was battle and this and that. Nothing was there. It was just magic. Gaudapada says we don't take sides either with Samkhya or with Nayaikas.

Gaudapada tells his students, those who are studying Advaita Vedanta, you need to understand **विवदामो न तैः सार्धमविवादं निबोधत** - you need to understand the ultimate truth, ultimate reality, which is beyond any kind of conflict. Advaita does not have conflict with anyone. We don't have any conflict, we know you are correct. You are correct because within the field, within the area, where you are discussing you are correct. But that is not the whole truth. Then verses 6,7 and 8 come. The points in these three verses these have been discussed earlier

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अजातस्यैव धर्मस्य जातिमिच्छन्ति वादिनः ।

अजातो ह्यमृतो धर्मो मर्त्यतां कथमेष्यति ॥ Karika 6॥

The disputants (i.e. the dualists) contend that the ever-unborn (changeless) entity (Atman) undergoes change. How does an entity which is changeless and immortal partake of the nature of mortal

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Those who are trying to fight with us, we wish to say that Atman, whose nature is unborn, it is ridiculous to say that, it gets born. Mandukya will focus on nature. What is nature? That will make this idea clear. But this verse has been explained earlier. So says anything which is unborn, which is in its nature, which is its characteristic , how can it ever be born? How can it ever die?

On top

Ver==========

न भवत्यमृतं मर्त्यं न मर्त्यममृतं तथा ।

प्रकृतेरन्यथाभावो न कथंचिद्भविष्यति ॥ Karika 7॥

The immortal cannot become mortal, nor can the mortal ever become immortal. For it is never possible for a thing to change its nature

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An undying object can never die and an object, which by nature is unborn, can never be born, because nothing can change its nature.

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स्वभावेनामृतो यस्य धर्मो गच्छति मर्त्यताम् ।

कृतकेनामृतस्तस्य कथं स्थास्यति निश्चलः ॥ Karika 8॥

How can he who believes that the naturally immortal entity becomes mortal, maintain that the immortal, after passing through birth retains its changeless nature?

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So, how can you expect that an entity, by nature immortal, becomes mortal and maintain that immortal after passing through change retains its changeless nature? Atman is changeless and those who believe in cause and effect, they believe that it has undergone a change. Now you might wonder what has that to do with our discussion? Look, we are

talking about cause and effect and we are talking about nature, we are talking about Samkhya, actually we are talking about God, dualistic God. Because naya believes in a dualistic God. and practically every religion other than Vedanta believes in a dualistic God. When you say that the nature of a thing is unborn, you say that God is eternal and then something non-eternal comes out of it, is it possible? That non-eternal thing was it within the eternal thing? Or did something come out of His wish? If it was within his thing, which means that its nature is not eternal. And if it came out from outside, then it contradicts those who believe that creation came out from within God. So we are left with only one option: that only God exists. Creation as we understand does not exist.

These are problems with dualists. Not with Bhakti literature. Because in devotion, those who practice Bhakti, if you ask anyone who is a Sri Krishna devotee, real Vaishnav, who has real understanding, he will say that Lord Krishna alone has become everything. Sri Ramakrishna tells a very beautiful story that once Krishna and Arjuna, being very good friends, had gone somewhere and Krishna asked Arjuana, Arjuna, what do you see on that tree at a distance. Arjuna said Blackberries (Jamun). Krishna said look carefully, Then Arjuna said that I see bunches of Krishna hanging from the tree. Slightly difficult to understand and more difficult to appreciate. God alone has become everything. If you say that God alone has become everything and there is no transformation as such, I am seeing it. Arjuna initially saw Jamun. Blackberries. And when Krishna said no, look carefully, then he saw Krishna. This is the thing, this is what Vedanta teaches. When you see superficially you see something. When your mind has been taken to a higher plane by you Guru, by your Sadhana, then you see things differently. And then if you come across somebody who is seeing what you have been seeing, how can you laugh at it? Because you also earlier saw that. And then Gaudapada hits the nail and starts the discussion on Prakriti, Nature.

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सांसिद्धिकी स्वाभाविकी सहजा अकृता च या ।

प्रकृतिः सेति विज्ञेया स्वभावं न जहाति या ॥ Karika 9॥

By Prakriti or the inherent nature of a thing is understood that which, when acquired , becomes completely part and parcel of the thing, that which is its very characteristic quality, that which is a part of it from its very birth, that which does not depend upon anything extraneous for its origin and that which never ceases to be itself.

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Nature is being defined. The word for nature in Sanskrit is Prakriti. It comes from Kri dhatu, and kri means to do. That which becomes, that which is this sense of becoming. Vedanta is such an old philosophy and now look at the expressions, and see the ideas behind every world. **सांसिद्धिकी स्वाभाविकी सहजा अकृता च या, प्रकृतिः सेति विज्ञेया स्वभावं न जहाति या** - Prakriti which has certain characteristics, **स्वभावं न जहाति या** - that is Prakriti the nature when an

object acquires a nature. For example water becomes ice, water as an object now has acquired a certain nature - what is that nature? Ice is much more cold , much more cooler than water - that nature cannot go away. So, once you acquire it, once you have it, first is an essential part of the thing, second one is that it is the characteristic quality. What is your nature? You know sometimes when we say the fellow does not have a good nature, or when we say one has a good nature, what exactly is good natured person, which when acquired, when you acquire certain values, first is it essential part of the thing or a person, and second the characteristic quality.

Mahatma Gandhi's characteristic quality was non-violence. He might have made political blunders but that was not his real strength. His strength lay in a simple thing that was non-violence. You can criticise his political acumen, but you can never criticise his being a non-violent person or a truthful person. He had these two characteristics - Satya and Ahimsa. And that's all. The third one is its inalienable nature that something that cannot be taken away from it. From birth and which is non-extraneous to it. It does not come from outside. Acharya Shankar explains, we will be discussing it once again., - **सांसिद्धि**, which is an essential part of the thing. Acharya Shankar gives an example of Yogi. When a yogi practices Yog Sadhana, he acquires certain powers . when he acquires certain powers, that power remains. Power does not go away. So acquiring the siddhis - **सांसिद्धिकी** - sang siddhiki, is essential part of the thing. Yogi means siddhi. **स्वाभाविकी** - is something which is characteristic quality. For example when we say fire, we know fire and its burning power is Swabhabik. Fire has the capacity to burn. These are one and the same. And **सहजा** - Sahaja - is something which is its inalienable nature. For example, say birds have the power to fly. We know that bird has natural power to fly - sahaja- Sansiddhi Swabhabik and sahaj, apparently these words have the same meaning but connotations are different. And **अकृता** - is not extraneous it. It has not been done by anybody. For example they say, water flows downward because of the gravitational pull, it is in the nature of the things to go down. Particularly water flows downward. So these are the four things, when you acquire something, when an object has innate quality -Yogi's power and then fire's burning power, bird's flying power and water's going downwards. These are the different examples of nature. Technical terms is Sansiddhiki, Swabhabiki , sahaja and akrita. In this world, an object never gives up its nature. Something very natural we know. Every object in this world, which is defined by certain traits, does not give up its nature. How do you expect that Atman, which is not even born, which is superior to all, give up its nature? The simple story of a Sadhu and a scorpion. Scorpion was biting a sadhu repeatedly and the sadhu was trying to

save it. When asked he says that such a lowly creature, it is not giving up its nature, how can I give up my nature? This story beautifully explains what nature is.

45. Vedanta - The Supreme Philosophy

We have been discussing different Philosophies and how Vedanta objects to them. When you try to establish your own philosophy, your own outlook, you will have to contradict other philosophies and point at their weaknesses. Here we shall take up three very important philosophies.

We have already stated that Hindu religion has six major philosophies based on Vedic learning. Of these Nyaya and Vaisheshika have the same premises, similarly is the case with Samkhya and Yog philosophies. However in the case of Mimamsa and Vedanta, although they are taken together, their premises are quite different.

Vedanta takes the argument style of Nyaya philosophy and takes on all the philosophies. The credit goes to Acharya Shankar. When he established Vedanta he took the style of argument of the Nyayaikas and Vaisheshikas. And from Samkhya he took the theory of creation and from Yog the meditative techniques.And from Mimamsa, he took the way of establishing the arguments based on Vedas. Thus Shankarachrya takes all the philosophies to establish Vedanta. But Vedanta is not a mixture of all these philosophies.

Vedanta Philosophy is extremely subtle. It is not easy to grasp the finer points of Vedanta. It is nearly impossible for a common man to understand Vedanta. However Acharya Shankar really made Vedanta accessible to all. He showed how Vedanta can be applied to daily life. He took strong points of each of the systems of philosophies and hit them at their weakest point. That makes Vedanta extremely logical. Even though Vedanta has taken points from different systems of Philosophy, how does it demolish other philosophies? We shall see that.

First it takes up Naya and Vaisheshika. And then Samkhya and then Mimamsa. You may note that Mimasa has been the most powerful philosophy and Mimasakas, the ritualists, are the most powerful speakers. When Acharya Shankara came on the scene, his main task was to defeat these Mimansakas. Kumarila Bhatta was the most famous Mimansaka of his time, and when Shankaracharya went to argue with him, he was already about to die of self immolation. Kuamarila Bhatta told him to go to his disciple Mandana Mishra in Mithila. Shankara Digviajaya erroneously puts Mandana Mishra in Ujjain. But this is wrong. Shankar Digviajay is the only source book we have on the life of Acharya Shankar but this particular fact is wrong. Mandana Mishra was from Mithila and there was a very strong tradition of both

Mimamsa and Vedanta in Mithila. It continues even today. In Ujjain there is nothing. Acharya Shankar had arguments with Mandana Mishra and he defeated him and Mandana Mishra became his disciple.

Acharya Shankar's task was very difficult. On one hand he had to defeat the Mimamsakas and on the other hand he had to defeat the Boudhhas, who were extremely powerful in his time.

Acharya Shakar was not a philosopher. Very often you find books where people talk about Acharya Shankar as Philosopher. But he was not. He was just an interpreter. And we do not know what exactly Acharya Shankar's philosophy would have been. Somebody has written a book on Vijnana Vedanta something like that. See, you cannot compare the works based on Sri Ramakrishna's words with the interpretation by Shankaracharya. Shankaracharya's work was cut out. He had to defeat the Buddhists and he had to defeat the Mimamsakas. But Sri Ramakrishna was a free speaker. You cannot compare a person who is speaking freely with one whose arguments are channelised. That is absolutely wrong. However if you go deeper you find that Sri Ramakrishna and Shankaracharya are talking the same thing.

Now, Mimamsakas were very powerful and even today you will find that every Hindu is essentially a Mimamsaka. Each one of us, you me everybody. These rituals have come to us from Mimamsakas. And lots of things that we know about Vedas have come from Mimamsakas.

Acharys Shankar did not throw away everything. That was his beauty. Acharya Shankar was essentially a builder. Swami Vivekananda was essentially a builder. So, Shankaracharya created a monolith in which he took the strong points of all these philosophies and yet demolished them. Now we will see how Mandukya Karika demolishes different Philosophies.

First is Naya. According to Naya, those of you who are interested can listen to our talks on Hinduism in the playlist, named Hinduism.

In verse 9, we have already talked about Prakriti, Nature. Gaudapada uses this nature or Prakriti, to attack Nayaikas. According to Nayaikas, the result or the effect is real. To remind you Samkhya says that cause itself has become effect. According to Nayaikas, that is the Naya and Vaisheshika system of philosophies, the realists, the effect is something new. You might wonder why exactly we are discussing all these. Because all these philosophies are current even today. The whole of western philosophy and people who argue with you, all of them will be taking up this stand or that stand .

A person is young, then becomes an adult, then gets old and someday dies. According to Nayaikas, the transformation that we see of the soul has to be real. That is what they have said. A transformation, every transformation is something real. So do you mean to say that Jiva or the soul really undergoes all these transformations? According to Jainism, (you may read my book, The world of religions to know more about Jainism), the soul that is within the body is of the same size as the body. So an elephant has a larger soul than an ant. It is a fundamental philosophy of the Jains. As the body changes, the size of the soul changes. How do they explain it? They say if a lamp is put in a small pot. Light will be covering that small region and if you put it in a larger pot, it will be covering a larger region. It's just like that. That's the extremely fundamental philosophy of the Jains. So the soul indeed seems to go through some kind of transformation according to different people. That is why in Christian tradition, plants and animals have no soul. They are living beings, they don't have souls and the souls of the evil doers, murderers etc are darkened and the souls of noble persons are bright etc.. Now Naya being a vedic school of thought,, so Gaudapada attacks them and says we have innumerable sayings in the Veda, according to which Atman is beyond all these. So how do you say that Jeeva can undergo transformation? And how can you even say that the transformation a soul experiences is real?

So what exactly happens is that the transformations that take place are just the imagination of the soul. They cannot be real. Because Atman which is Jiva, Atman which Brahman, how can it really undergo these transformations? So, the transformations that we undergo, cannot be real.

And then he takes up Samkhya and it says that Prakriti, that is nature, has two essential qualities. One is eternal and another is unborn. Arguments are beautiful. And you say cause itself becomes effect. And we are continuously seeing transformations. Milk becomes curd. That is a transformation. So according to you, milk itself has become curd. Whatever is there in this universe is Prakriti, so, Prakriti itself is becoming everything else. Isn't it? That means Prakriti is undergoing transformation. If Prakriti is undergoing transformation, then how can you say it is eternal? If Prakriti is eternal i.e., Nitya and you say that Prakriti is unborn but we are continuously seeing things getting born. So Prakriti is born because you say that cause and effect are the same. Argument is not very difficult, it is rather simple.

And then it takes up Mimamsa. In Mimamsa, Dharma becomes the most important thing. Dharma can be best understood as characteristics, not the dharma the way we understand and dharma is also part of Prakriti, nature. The problem is that, they say that, as you perform dharma, as you get into noble acts, your body changes. And as your body changes, your Dharma changes. The idea of caste system and all, are rooted in Mimamsa. Vedanta cannot accept the caste system. Vedanta, as for its philosophy, cannot have a caste system. Mimamsa will have a caste system. In fact the entire caste system is a product of this

Mimamsa which was held by the Brahmins. These are the three major philosophies which are contradicted here.

One may think that Vedanta went unchallenged. No, Vedanta did not go unchallenged. Ramanuja, (we have Ramanuja's short biography and Philosophy in that hinduism playlist, - Vishista Advaita.) raised seven anupapatti - seven great objections against Vedanta. We will not discuss this in detail here. What Ramanuja did and the objections that were raised were not related to Brahman, it was not related to Atman, but it was related to Maya. Every philosophy has its own weak point. Vedanta has only one weak point, where you can attack and that is Maya. Problems with other systems of thoughts, other systems of Philosophy are many. They have many more chinks. Vedanta has to defend only Maya. It doesn't have to defend anything else. Everything else is solid. Absolutely Iron cast. One can ask why Maya is not so. It is not iron cast because by its very definition, Maya cannot be defined. Maya is a statement of fact. One just cannot define a statement of fact. As a student of Vedanta, as an admirer of Vedanta I can only say that Maya is the great contribution of Vedanta.

Ramanujacharya was a great philosopher, he was a great saint and India has so many followers of Ramanuja even today. But when it comes to his attack on Advaita, I feel that somewhere he missed the point. When Vedanta repeatedly explains that maya is a statement of fact, Maya is something which cannot be described, Maya is incomprehensible. So Sri Ramanuja had seven objections - Anupapatti. For example, what is the locus standi of Maya? Where does Maya stand? Acharya Shankar in his commentary on Gita in the 13th chapter has clearly explained - Drishya Drishyate Tasya. He who is in Maya, he knows. He sees it. It is a statement of fact. You cannot object to that. For example then again asks, what is its nature? Is it real? Is it imaginary? But believe me these are all just arguments. However, followers of Shankar and followers of Ramanuja, followers of Madhwa, keep on fighting even these days. It continues in present times. I myself have been witness to these people who keep on arguing and there have been cases when these great scholars have nearly come to fisticuffs in front of the audience trying to prove their point.

With the fundamental ideas made clear, now we shall now we will get into the verses. We start with verse no 10

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जरामरणनिर्मुक्ताः सर्वे धर्माः स्वभावतः ।

जरामरणमिच्छन्तश्च्यवन्ते तन्मनीषया ॥ Karika 10॥

All the Jivas are, by their very nature, free from senility and death. They think, as it were, that they are subject to these and thus by this very thought they appear to deviate from their very nature.

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All the Jivas are, by their very nature, free from senility and death. This is a fact. Senility means old age. Jiva by its very nature is free of ageing, free of death, free of birth, free from

any kind of transformation. But they think they are subject to old age and death. And by the very power of thought they appear to deviate from their true nature. We think that I am growing old. So, how do you justify it? Is it real? Since nature never changes, and we know that Jiva, as per the statements of the greatest of the sages, never undergoes any transformation and yet we feel that we are continuously changing. Why? And will you say these changes are real? You cannot say that soul dies. You cannot say that soul is born. People who think that somebody dies, people think that somebody is born. It is complete;y wrong.

All the Jivas, every living being, wherever there is Jiva, wherever there is life, essentially they are free from ShadaVikara (षड्विकार), six changes. Jivatama being Atman, is not affected by old age. It is not affected by death and yet it appears, it seems as if a Jiva, an embodied being is afflicted by old age and it is affected by death. So, it appears as if Atman has moved away from its nature. But that is impossible.

Somebody comes and says that his father has passed away. Who really has passed away? Atman can never pass away. The subtle body which defines a personality can never pass away. It can just move from body to body. Atman as Atman does not change. Neither it is born, nor does it die. Subtle body, it moves from body to body. And this body, made up of the earth elements, the elements that are found on this earth, it is just like a vortex, wherever there is a whirlpool, say in a water body, water particles go inside and come out. The particles that make you, me everybody, once we disintegrate, once we are dead, these particles will move and form new bodies. And as particles one cannot die. As subtle body one cannot die. As Atman one can never die. So who dies? Your thought dies, nothing else dies.

This is what is in Gita, Sri Krishna told Arjuna - Think, who are you? If you think of yourself as Atman, Atman is neither born, nor does it die. So there is no death. If you think of a subtle body, you will keep on moving. And if you go just by matter, then there was never birth, and there will never be death, because matter particles will move on to form newer bodies. So, what exactly changes? It is your imagination that changes. Is there a snake or a rope? The change lies in imagination. In reality, there is no change.

And then Karika moves on to attacking Samkhya. First it makes its own stand clear that Atman is neither born nor dies.

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कारणं यस्य वै कार्यं कारणं तस्य जायते ।

जायमानं कथमजं भिन्नं नित्यं कथं च तत् ॥ Karika 11॥

The disputant, according to whom the cause itself is the effect, maintains that the cause itself is born as the effect. How is it possible for the cause to be unborn if it be said to be born (as the effect)? How again is it said to be eternal if it be subject to modification(i.e., birth)?

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It attacks Samkhya heavily. The disputants, those who are arguing, according to them cause itself is the effect. Samkhya maintains that the cause is born as the effect, naturally. If cause is the effect, then cause is born as effect. It is very simple. If it is born, how can it be called birthless? I will request you to listen to our talks on Raja Yog. While discussing the philosophy of Raja Yog, we have mentioned that Smakhya and Yog, they maintain that there are two realities. One is Purusha and another is Prakriti. Purusha is consciousness, Prakriti is some total of matter and energy and they are eternal. So on the one hand, you say that Prakriti is Nitya (eternal), it is Aja (unborn), and yet you say it goes on transforming itself. Transformation according to Samkhya is real. And yet the cause itself has become effect according to them. That means Prakriti itself is becoming effect. And the first transformation of Prakriti is Mahat, the cosmic mind, the Ahankar, cosmic ego and from there it keeps on evolving, keeps on transforming. Now at every step Prakriti is transforming. That means Prakriti is changing, is becoming non-eternal and yet you say it is eternal. There is a contradiction. What you are saying contradicts your own standpoint. And says it is subject to modification, how then can it be said to be eternal. You say that modifications are real and cause itself has become the effect. So Prakriti itself has become, say this pen, this pen is modification of certain things. What is that ultimate cause? Prakriti itself has become this pen, Prakriti has undergone transformation, how can you say that Prakriti is eternal? And if Prakriti is born as Mahat, the cosmic mind, how do you say that Prakriti is never born, that is Aja? Aja means that which is never born.

So, on the one hand you say that Prakriti is eternal, implying it is everywhere, and yet we see that here is this pen, and here is this microphone, that mean Prakriti is manifesting as Pen, Prakriti is manifesting as this microphone and Prakriti is manifest at some at some place and it is not manifested at some places, how can it be eternal in every sense, eternal is space, eternal in time? More importantly, everything that we see in this world, we see in this universe is destructible. If things are destructible, how can you say it is eternal?

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कारणाद्यद्यनन्यत्वमतः कार्यमजं यदि ।
जायमानाद्धि वै कार्यात्कारणं ते कथं ध्रुवम् ॥ Karika 12॥

If, as you say, the cause is non-different from the effect, then the effect also must be unborn. Further, how can the cause be permanent if it be non-different from the effect which is born?

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If as you say the effect is non-different from the cause, then the effect too must be unborn. Further how can the cause be eternal, if it is non-different from the effect which is born.

It was mentioned that cause and effect being the same, if cause is eternal then effect also must be eternal. You cannot say that cause is eternal and effect is not. It is a very simple argument. Acharya Shankar explains simply that Karana, that is cause, is eternal. So the

effect that is Karya that also has to be eternal. But we find that whatever the effect, it is born, it undergoes transformation and then it disintegrates. Now you cannot say that there is something eternal, part of it is eternal and part of it is non-eternal. And Acharya Shankar, uses a very unusual example. He says it cannot be that you have one part of a chicken as meat and another part to lay eggs. This is indeed an unusual argument. Because he does not use this example anywhere else. Moreover the general understanding in Hindu religion is that chicken should not be eaten. However wild chicks were eaten. And Hindus never kept chicken. It started after the muslims came and now of course many many Hindus take, not all. I know hundreds of families who do not eat chicken. They feel polluted if even a feather touches them. Acharya Shankar's use of this example is very interesting. The idea is you cannot say that one part of Prakriti is eternal and another part non-eternal.

Do you realize that the same argument is applicable to personal God too? The same argument can be applied to every system of Philosophy, every dualistic system of religion, which believes that God is eternal and yet the universe is not. It is not only Samkhya, those who believe in Lord Krishna say that Lord Krishna is eternal. If Lord Krishna is eternal then everything he produces will be eternal. The problem is because, every time we think of creation we think of say pot maker and pot, cloth maker and the cloth. Like in earlier times we used to have weavers. We still have weavers but it has changed a lot. A potter makes a pot, so potter and pot, they are different. We are forgetting that the potter himself is non-eternal. When it comes to creation, when we say that God created this universe, we think of God as the potter and universe as the pot and the way a potter makes the pot exactly like that we think that God made this universe. But we forget that God is not a potter, God is not a great watchmaker, which the 15th -16th century physicists used to say.

God is not a great watchmaker. God is not like a potter. If God is eternal, there is nothing else other than God. and every part of God has to be eternal. If everything is eternal, this Universe has to be eternal. Even if you say universe in totality has to be eternal. How do you talk about one time creation? How can there be one creation? Actually, dear listeners, if you go very deep, very deep into thinking, believe me, you will end up with Ajata Vada. as it said, nothing is born. Only God exists.Creation is just an appearance. It cannot be real. Because if it is real, if you say that creation is real then all these arguments that Gaudapada has been using in Mandukya Karika, gets demolished, when God himself becomes non-eternal. God himself becomes changeable. Vedanta does not face these problems as I said the chink, small chink in the arguments of Vedanta, in the whole philosophy is its Maya. People attack it but Maya is something that one has to know intuitively. If you do sadhana you will know it. If your mind becomes calm you will understand it. And if I come across anyone who attacks maya, I am suspicious of that person. I say this with my great respect to all the great teachers and due respect to great scholars. See, I am not a scholar nor I am

a philosopher. One thing I understand is that, if you can understand, it is not acceptance, mind it, it is not like that you believe in a sacred book and then you do anything. You say that I believe in my sacred book, and anyone who opposes it is my enemy. It is not that. They say that religion runs on beliefs. Maybe. Other religions. But not Vedanta. Vedanta does not run on belief. It doesn't ask you to accept maya as some kind of belief, some kind of hypothesis, some kind of axiom, no nothing. It is just a statement of fact. If at all compare Vedanta philosophy with the scientific outlook, the maximum you can say is maya is an axiomatic truth. The way Einstein said that the speed of light always remains constant, it is an axiomatic truth. Just like that Maya is an axiomatic truth. Everything else can be explained. Or if you go back. Brahman alone exists. Everything else that you see is Maya. It is appearance. Because if you don't, then one part becomes eternal and another part becomes non-eternal.

Another very interesting thing you will find in Vedanta, and that is there in every system of Philosophy, every statement must be corroborated by an example. There must exist an example in the real world that will explain the truth. So, when they explain maya, maya being a statement of fact, it is a state of mind, they use examples of snake and the rope.

कारणाद्यद्यनन्यत्वमतः कार्यमजं यदि - as you say that cause itself has become effect, cause being eternal effect also must be eternal. What about the things that we see, we see that everything is getting transformed. They have their answers, but answers are not always fully acceptable. And that is what it says in the next verse.

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अजाद्वै जायते यस्य दृष्टान्तस्तस्य नास्ति वै ।

जाताच्च जायमानस्य न व्यवस्था प्रसज्यते ॥ Karika 13॥

There is no illustration to support the view of him who says that the effect is born from the unborn cause. Again if it be said that the effect is produced from a cause which is itself born then it leads to a regressus ad infinitum

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There is no illustration to support, whatever statement you are making> It must be philosophically profound, logically sound and supported by examples, unless you are not about something profound, that is something that I cannot grasp with my senses. And yet it must be logical and there must be some examples to support it.

It is not that we are trying to reach a conclusion from an example. That is a very bad form of argument. You make a statement, show how it is logical and then support it with an example. In example only that part will be taken which needs to be taken to support the statement that has been made. There is no illustration to support the view that the effect is born after an unborn cause. Again if it is said that the effect is produced from a cause which itself is born, then this leads to an infinite regress. Infinite regress is when you go and try to find out the final ultimate substratum. You say that this effect is born of this cause and this

causes born of that. You go on and on. "Regressus ad infinitum," meaning "regression to infinity" in Latin, describes a philosophical concept where a series of justifications or assumptions is endlessly required, leading to an infinite and potentially unresolvable chain of reasoning. You have to stop somewhere. So they don't accept Samkhya because of this. The basic premise, you begin with this, that Prakriti is eternal, it is unborn, yet we find everything going the other way.

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हेतोरादिः फलं येषामादिर्हेतुः फलस्य च ।

हेतोः फलस्य चानादिः कथं तैरूपवर्ण्यते ॥ Karika 14॥

How can they, who assert that the effect is the cause of the cause and the cause is the cause of the effect, maintain the beginninglessness of both the cause and the effect?

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This is very interesting. Mimamsa, as I told you, is a very powerful system of thought in India. It said, Dharma is all important. Dharma gives you the body and then in turn the body gives the Dharma. So, according to Mimamsa, I have done some noble things that is why I am a monk. Expected to be given more to religion and spirituality. And because I am here, if I perform my work well, if my thoughts are well, more Dharma will come. And with more Dharma, I will have a better body.

For example in Buddhist tradition, you might have heard of Jataka, where Buddha is being born in different species and slowly he is evolving etc. and Bhagwan Buddha is at times taken as an incarnation avatara and sometimes as an evolving soul. Why evolving soul? Because slowly you are getting established in more Dharma, and so you are evolving more and more. There is Dharma and Dharma produces body and body produces dharma and dharma produces body and this is an unending cycle.

So Vedanta says, make it clear which one was in the beginning. The famous example of the seed and tree. But seed and tree are from the biology standpoint. When you are talking about the ultimate reality, you have to say whether both Dharma and body are eternal or not. For example Samkhya says, Purusha and Prakriti are eternal. Just like that you say that Dharma and body they are both eternal.Or you say which one is eternal. If Dharma produces body, and body produces the dharma, which came first? Either you say that there are two realities, each giving birth to the other, or you say there is one reality. If you say there is one single reality then you tell which one came first. It is such a simple thing. Because then what about Atman? From where Atman will be produced? You have to be very clear about it.

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हेतोरादिः फलं येषामादिर्हेतुः फलस्य च ।

तथा जन्म भवेत्तेषां पुत्राज्जन्म पितुर्यथा ॥ Karika 15॥

Those who maintain that the effect is the cause of the cause and the cause is the cause of the effect, describe, as a matter of fact, the evolution after the manner of the birth of the father from the son.
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You are saying that Dharma produces body and body produces Dharma, it is like father gives birth to son and son gives birth to father. So you tell very clearly which follows what.

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सम्भवे हेतुफलयोरेषितव्यः क्रमस्त्वया ।

युगपत्संभवे यस्मादसम्बन्धो विषाणवत् ॥ Karika 16॥

In case causality be still maintained, the order in which cause and effect succeed each other must be stated. If it be said that they appear simultaneously, then they being like the two horns of an animal, cannot be mutually related to each other.
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So you say whether the cause and effect are simultaneous or they follow one after the other. So this idea that, cause produces effect and effect produces cause, If one follows the other you tell from where it began. If they appear simultaneously, they are then mutually unrelated like the horns of an animal. Actually Mimansakas do not explain it.

46. Contradiction imply non-creation

We have been discussing various theories related to cause and effect. We have been discussing how each of these philosophies contradict the other. The only conclusion is that there is actually no creation. In this particular statement that I made, the contradictions prove that there is a negation. When you are talking about various theories of cause and effect, the one possibility that comes to fore is that there is no cause and effect. It has very serious implications. Now before I begin, let me tell you a joke. This actually is a true incident. In one of the American universities once, four friends were coming by car and they got delayed. Students have a tendency to get delayed. When they reached the university, the class had naturally started. So, the professor marked them absent and that would be pretty serious. So they made up a story that there was a tire puncture, and so naturally all they had to change the tire and they got delayed. The professor was a very witty person. He took out four pieces of paper, handed it over to each of the four and asked them to write down which tire was punctured. Naturally they got caught. Because when you are telling a lie, make sure to have your story complete. Now the contradictions that will come from that fib made by the students, those contradictions will point that nothing happened. Gaudapada is using the same argument. When you say that there is cause and effect, and you say that the process of cause and effect is such and such and come up with various theories, it only

shows that probably there is no cause and effect. The important term is “probably”. And then Gaudapada goes on to prove Ajatavada. And then more importantly says that AjataVada that is non-creation has no conflict, no quarrel with all these theories. In this relative world, this is very much possible, because it is all a game of the mind. We shall see, what we speak of cause and what we speak of cause and effect is actually just a word play.

We saw earlier when Karika was explaining the Upanishadic statements and was presenting the arguments, it showed how actually there is no creation. Now it takes up one philosophy after the other and shows that inherent contradiction and this conclusion and actually these contradictions are because there is no creation.

The moment you say that there is no cause and effect, can you imagine how devastating this statement can be? What are the implications of this? First - we are always looking for meaning and purpose in life. There is no meaning and purpose in life. Carl Jung, who was such a great psychologist and philosopher, had pointed out the problem of Western culture. Western culture, which is based on semitic religions, Abrahamic religions, believes that God created this universe at some point of time. God cannot be an irrational being. Since he is not an irrational being there must be some purpose and so we are actually part of that purpose. Actually this is not directly from Abrahamic religion. Abrahamic religion itself borrows it from Persian Zoroastrian religion. Their God and devil fight between each other and human beings are used as soldiers of God. The conclusion is foregone that God, Ahura Maza, will be victorious.

Now see, just one simple philosophical suggestion. Just think of all theories that we have in Philosophy, whether Indian philosophy or western philosophy or Greek philosophy, whatever philosophy you say, so we have theory of mind coming out of matter, and matter coming out of mind and there is fatalism and there is determinism and there is God’s will, there is this, there is that. Just imagine the number of conflicts that are there. And they can easily be resolved by one simple statement. There is no creation. That is AjataVada, or AjatiVada - there is no creation, The moment you say that there is no creation all these theories make sense. For example, you know, very often I find that in the cyber world, social media, people keep on asking if God is true and if God is true they why we have so many religions. It only shows that religions are mere paths, religion is not the ultimate truth. It has devastating consequences. God alone is truth and nothing else. That is exactly what the Upanishads say. It is not only about religion, religious philosophy and speculative philosophies, materialistic philosophy, any kind of philosophy that you may bring in, you will find that each of these philosophies will be at conflict with the other and will be contradicting each other. This is because actually there is no creation.

Let me remind you that we have ParinamaVada, where effect comes out of the cause and SatkaryaVada, where cause itself converts itself into effect. And there is Vedanta's VivartaVada where there appears to be some change but actually there is no change.

In the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, known as Sri Ramakrishna Kathamrita in Bengali, there are many narrations, where Sri Ramakrishna is seeing everything as pure consciousness. Even in his early days when he used to perform worship we see that all the utensils used for the purpose of worship are all pure consciousness, and he started throwing flowers in all directions because he was seeing consciousness everywhere. Much later, we find in the gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, he is seeing everything as consciousness. Be it the sacrificial goat, be it anything related to that. ब्रह्मार्पणं ब्रह्म हविः ब्रह्माग्नौ ब्रह्मणा हुतम् ।ब्रह्मैव तेन गंतव्यं ब्रह्मकर्म समाधिना ।। Brahmarpanam Brahma Havih Brahmagnau Brahmana hutaṃ Brahmaiva Tena Gantavyama Brahmakarma Samadhinah - everything is consciousness. If there is something in life that you should try to experience, If there is anything in life that I wish to experience and I am being honest, it is to have that experience where you see everything as consciousness, including this pen. how I wish to see that! That there is pure consciousness and it is just a ripple on that infinite ocean of consciousness. It is no theory, It is no philosophy. The thing is, maybe I am deviating slightly from the philosophical discussions, but let me tell you when it comes to philosophy, howsoever great the philosopher may be, he cannot thump his chest and say I have seen it like this. If you are describing this world, well then I also know it, you have a better intellect so you can come up with greater explanation, but when it comes to God, you cannot say that this is the end of it. And the great masters who experience that like say Jesus or Buddha, they don't contradict each other. They do not. And when it comes to spiritual realisations no doubt that Sri Ramakrishna is the last word. Reason being he went through all these paths and he says yes indeed all these are true. However Advaita is the last word he says, that which we are discussing. That said, now let us get back to our discussions.

Our philosophy has ParinamaVada, SatkaryaVada and VivartaVada. When you are discussing Philosophy, you cannot just make a statement. You have to explain the entire thing, which are three things - Jiva (individual), Jagat (the universe) and Ishwara (God). Which means you have to experience consciousness, you have to explain matter and you have to explain life. You say consciousness appearing through matter is life or whatever it is, and then you have to have a coherent philosophy. Often people, mostly youngsters, come to me and say "according to me " - but who cares? What is your knowledge? Under whom have you studied? Such statements don't work in Philosophy.

It is not just you pick something from here and something from there. Once one gentleman, a sculptor, was making a statue of Swamiji. Naturally there was a clay model and whenever

he made the left side properly, the right side went off, and when he made the right side proper, the left side went off. So one expert was called, and he used to take a lot of paan (betel leaf) so he took some paan, started chewing it, and he set it right. The other one said, look you set the right side right but see, the left side has gone off. Very interesting incident for us. I heard it when I was young and loved it. This is what happens. You explain something, the other thing goes away. As they say ,there is a very famous joke about Heisenberg's uncertainty principle. Heisenberg was a great physicist who gave the famous uncertainty principle. Once he was charged for speeding. And he was asked by the traffic police, Sir, do you know what your speed is? He answered, I know where I am and I do not know my speed. Because according to quantum physics, this is what happens. If you can tell the position of a subatomic particle you cannot tell the speed at which it is travelling. You catch hold of one and the other one becomes wild.

You explain this to this world and as you explain meticulously you find that the idea of God is slipping away. And that is the problem with materialistic philosophy. They are so hell bent on explaining the world that God is going away. If you start explaining God too much, the world slips away. However, your philosophy has to be coherent, whatever be your philosophy. That is why Spinoza is considered to be the greatest rationalist. Because he created an uniform philosophy and there was a consistency about it. The problem with people who talk, particularly scientists, is that they really don't have any consistency. They will talk absolutely clearly about a subject or a small part of a subject. But ask them to give a complete picture, they will fail. When people ridicule philosophy they miss this point. The job of philosophy is to give a complete picture. So, Gaudapada objected to SatkaryaVada vehemently and said that look, while explaining the universe you say that Prakriti is eternal, and you say that cause itself becomes effect, which means that the eternal has become non-eternal. Not only that it has become non-eternal, it has become non-eternal simultaneously at so many places. It does not stand to reason.

And then it takes up ParinamaVada, cause and effect relationship and philosophy of Mimamsa. Mimamsakas are masters of philosophy. Cause gives birth to effect and the effect work gives birth to cause. That is being attacked. And if you believe in that, you end up believing that father gives birth to son and in turn, son gives birth to father.

Karika asks, tell me which one comes first and were they produced simultaneously? Naturally there is cause and there is effect and you say that they are related and they are related in such a way that cause gives birth to effect and effect gives birth to cause. So, either something came earlier or both of them came simultaneously like the famous chicken and egg problem. Chicken and egg problem can be solved easily if you say that there is no creation. But it is counterintuitive that you don't feel like accepting it. So, on to verse 17.

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फलादुत्पद्यमानस्सन्न ते हेतुः प्रसिध्यति ।

अप्रसिद्धः कथं हेतुः फलमुत्पादयिष्यति ॥Karika 17॥

Your cause cannot be established if it be produced from the effect. How can the cause, which is itself not established, give birth to effect?

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Cause cannot be established if it is produced from the effect. Cause gives birth to effect and effect again gives birth to cause. For example, our Mimamsa will say that our body is a product of Dharma, good and bad that we have performed. In turn this body produces Dharma. So there is Dharma, there is body and Dharma comes again. Verse 17 contradicts it and says the cause that you affirm, cannot be established as the cause, if it is produced from the effect. Cause means cause, like we see that God is the cause of everything. President Roosevelt famously had a notice put up on his desk, “the buck stops here”. Passing the buck, in bureaucracy this is a favourite thing. Those of you who have some experience with bureaucrats you know that they keep on passing the buck. That is, not taking responsibility. So Roosevelt had this written on his table, the buck stops here. As the President cannot pass it on to somebody. Somewhere you have to say here it ends. God is the ultimate cause. The way you people are talking, there is no cause and if the cause is produced from the effect it cannot be any cause. So how can the cause which itself is not established give birth to the effect. This is another argument.

On the one hand you say that this is a cause and yet the cause itself is not established. How can there be an effect? When you are talking about chicken and egg, first you decide which one is the real cause. You will say that well we cannot.

There are many scientific papers which are still discussing which one really came earlier. Once I was reading one paper and there it was said that it is confirmed that the egg came first through evolution. So, the hen is producing the egg, and the egg is producing the hen, and you cannot say which one came first. That proves that the cause itself is not fixed. If the cause itself is not fixed how can there be any effect? And neither cause is fixed and nor can it produce an effect. How can there be cause and effect? Actually this argument is absolutely simple. Some of you may find it difficult. Sometimes I find that people say that it’s difficult. It is difficult because we are seeing these arguments in parts. So maybe these arguments are not making the necessary impact on you. But if you see in totality, the whole picture will become clear.

What Karika is saying is that, there is no creation as such. God existed, God exists and God will continue to exist. Everything else that you see, is by God, pure consciousness, or whatever else you are seeing is just play of mind. Where does this mind come from? The moment you say, where this mind comes from, you are going into the question of cause and effect.

When I was a young monk, I used to go and meet a senior monk, Shrimad Swami Mokshadananda Maharaj regularly. At least once a week definitely and there was a period when I was in the same building with him for more than six months. By then he had grown old with no work and as luck would have been, I had no work for those six months. So naturally I used to go twice or thrice to his room, sit and talk. And whenever I browse these discussions he would always tell me just one thing - look, once again you are falling in the same pit of duality. This is like some people who gave birth to this, for example when you say God gives birth to all, your next question would be who gave birth to God? Who is the father of God? What should be your answer? Forget about giving answers to all these, people who are on social media and shouting and screaming, what is the answer to you yourself? Simple answer. God is beyond cause and effect. So, this question does not make sense. The question is invalid. However the same argument is applicable to everything. Where has the mind come from? You are back to the game of cause and effect. From where did Maya come? See, nowadays we have speakers on Vedas, Vedanta who are extremely popular and there are people who listen to those and come asking, Oh! It is all beautiful, but where does Maya come from? The problem with us is that we are badly trapped in this riddle of cause and effect, that we are looking for cause and effect. Although cause and effect itself does not exist. Secondly, even if you believe in cause and effect, you cannot ask questions, unless you gain full knowledge and comprehend.

In the famous episode between Gargi and Yagyavalka, Gargi went on asking questions to Yagyavalkya, just like that. And suddenly Yagyavalka stopped her saying look Gargi, if you keep on asking questions without understanding your head will fall in a thousand pieces. God is the substratum of all. Now what is the substratum of God? Basically what you are doing is you are asking questions which have no meaning. Karika goes one step beyond and says , there is actually no cause and effect. The cause and effect that you see is actually your imagination. As verse no 17 says that your cause itself is not established, then how can it give birth to some effect? You are talking about cause and effect . When we keep on talking about KarmaVada, when we keep on talking about Karmafal, then we say that it was all my Karma, we don't even realise that actually there is no cause and effect. Worse, there is no purpose in life, there is no meaning to life , there is no goal to life, then we are the meaning of life. We are the cause and effect of life. Because I alone exist, for you, you alone exist. And I and you, we are not only non-different, the question of difference, just does not arise.

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यदि हेतोः फलात्सिद्धिः फलसिद्धिश्च हेतुतः ।
कतरत्पूर्वनिष्पन्नं यस्य सिद्धिरपेक्षया ॥ Karika 18॥

If the cause is produced from the effect and if the effect is, again, produced from the cause, which of the two is born first upon which depends the birth of the other?

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This is something we discussed earlier.

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अशक्तिरपरिज्ञानं क्रमकोपोऽथ वा पुनः ।

एवं हि सर्वथा बुद्धै अजातिः परिदीपिता ॥ Karika 19॥

The inability (to reply), the ignorance (about the matter) and the impossibility of (establishing) the order of succession (of cause and effect) clearly lead the wise to stick to their theory of absolute non-evolution (Ajati).

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The inability to reply the questions raised about all these, that we are having and the ignorance about the matter and the impossibility of establishing the order of succession, you cannot establish the order of succession. When people go to the courts, particularly the higher courts, in case of property disputes, it is about succession problems. Who succeeds whom? Whose property it should be.

If the causal relation is admitted it clearly leads the wise to uphold under all conditions the doctrine of Ajati - non creation. Because of all these confusion we have, which came first, which came later, which gave birth to what, how is it possible that cause itself becomes effect, How can cause give birth to effect and then effect itself becomes cause, And you don't know which came earlier, which came later etc says that because of all these problems, those who are wise, they know that this world is not the last place. They show cause and effect is not the ultimate truth, It is not the invincible truth.

The ultimate truth is that there is no creation. The ultimate truth is that there is no cause and effect. It can be so disturbing!

Karika says you people are contradicting each other, none of you are correct. And if the theory of unborn, nothing is born is accepted, there is no problem. And that theory of the unborn has been explained earlier.

Then comes verse 20, which is very interesting because, what we have been discussing like cause and effect etc , father and son and son and father. Those people raise objections. Actually these objections are raised by the writer himself (Gaudapada) and it is as if this question could have been raised by the particular philosophy. What is that? It says, look, you vedantins, you have oversimplified things. When we talk about cause and effect, it is not like father and son. It is more like seed and sprout. It is obvious that trees are produced from seed and trees produce seed. Seed and sprout - the expression is Beejankur - Beej and Ankur, ankur is sprout and beej is seed. Cause and effect they are not born simultaneously like the two horns of a cow which are born simultaneously.

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बीजाङ्कुराख्यो दृष्टान्तः सदा साध्यसमो हि सः ।
न हि साध्यसमो हेतुः सिद्धौ साध्यस्य युज्यते ॥ Karika 20॥

The illustration of the seed and the sprout is itself a matter which is yet to be proved, The middle term (that is the illustration) which is itself yet to be proved (to be true) cannot be used for establishing a proposition to be proved.

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The illustration of the seed and the sprout is something yet to be proved. The illustration, that is the middle term, is itself yet to be proved, and cannot be used for establishing a proposition to be proved. These are terminologies used in Naya Shastra. The beginning statement, the middle and the end. Those who believe in cause and effect say that the right illustration is that of a seed and sprout. In reply the Karika says, **बीजाङ्कुराख्यो दृष्टान्तः सदा साध्यसमो हि सः** - the illustration of the seed and sprout is yet to be proved. Why is it yet to be proved? When you talk about seed and sprout, the problem is that you think that the series of seed and sprout are kind of eternal, beginningless, in the sense that you cannot reach the beginning. For example, those who know about the hen and egg, you will say that this series has been going on in cycles so you cannot really say which one came first. Those who believe in ParinamaVada, those who believe in cause and effect , raise an objection -this has been going on eternally so you cannot say which one began in the beginning. The expression is Adiman - beginningless. So both seed and sprout are adiman, since the beginning it is going on. Karika says fine, nothing wrong with it. But then where is the unity? If you say that seed and sprout this series has been going on since the beginning , somewhere they have to be united, where is the unity? Worse, whosoever has heard of such a series, there is no such example, why are you talking such things, where there is no proof of any such beginninglessness. That is there, though there is no beginning. because the very idea of birth itself is born of Avidya. Who causes Avidya? As Ramanuja famously asked. That is your problem that you keep on asking about the cause, where there is no cause and effect. It is just a statement that is there.

We are so accustomed to seeing patterns and because of patterns we are so accustomed to asking all these questions - who, why and how. Who gave birth to this effect? There was a cause and who gave birth to that. To let go, we keep on asking who and who or why and why etc.. Ultimately it just goes on. But now, it has to stop somewhere. Our training has been such that we cannot accept that. That is why, real philosophy is different from logical philosophy, speculative philosophy, or whatever philosophy it might be. Karika refuses and says that when you say that it is more like seed and sprout, cause and effect, they have been going on eternally, neither it makes any sense, nor it unites anywhere and nor has one ever seen any such things.in this world. So every possible explanation of cause and effect

has been negated. And because of that inner conflict, inter-conflict, intra-conflict the conclusion is that actually there is no creation.

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पूर्वापरापरिज्ञानम अजातेः परिदीपकम् ।

जायमानाद्धि वै धर्मात् कथं पूर्वं न गृह्यते ॥ Karika 21॥

The ignorance regarding the antecedence and the subsequence of the cause and the effect clearly proves the absence of evolution or creation. If the effect (Dharma, i.e. the Jiva) has really been produced from a cause, then why can you not point out the antecedent cause?

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There is absolutely no idea which came first and which came later. What do all these prove? Simply that there is no creation. There is a simpler way. If the Jiva that is dharma has really been born, then why can't you point to the antecedent cause. Here is me, ultimately it is not about the world more importantly it is me. It is not about explaining the universe, it is not about explaining the objects, in the universe the important thing is me. So, you have to explain where I came from. The antecedence and subsequence, which one came earlier. Which came later. This has to be explained very clearly. But there is no such knowledge. We have absolutely no idea about all this. There is no clear answer in any of the philosophies, by any one.

It was already said earlier that philosophy has to explain Jiva, Jagat and Ishwar. You have to explain where I have come from and who I am. You have no clear answer.

The simple question is from where I came? From my father. Where did my father come from? It goes on and on and ultimately there is no answer. See if you start thinking rationally and if you really start going backward and backward,you suddenly find that there is no locus standi, there is nothing on which you can stand. And ultimately it leaves you with one simple conclusion that there is no creation, the idea being I am non-different from God.

Taking the argument slightly offsided; those who are listening, I am sure that you have some knowledge about Vedanta, and you must have heard some of the talks here and there, and you must have at some point of time parrotted around, I am Brahman, Aham Brahmasmi. Do you realise that the moment you say Aham Brahmasmi, and for that matter anyone who says Aham Brahmasmi, and worse anyone who says I am son of God, I am God's child, actually the implication of every such statement is that there is no creation. There never was any creation.

Now when, say books like VedantaSar, are trying to explain Aham Brahmasmi, they will say, take away the upadhis, superimpositions. When I was young brahmachari, a novice, and I had been to Haridwar for the first time, that was long back. I was going by Rickshaw, and in Haridwar, and in such places, even the Rickshwalas are paid some money to take the travellers to a particular Ashram, so that they can be made disciples. So he started delivering me talks and the first thing he said was that, look, you have to forget that I am a

rickshaw puller and you also must forget that you are a passenger. Only then a conversation is possible. I started laughing. I understood that he was going to give me some big talk. That he did. It is interesting that a Rickshaw puller in Haridwar is talking about Vedanta, it was really lovely. Then he said, look if you want to learn more about it, you can come to our Ashram. So I understood what he meant. But anyway the idea that if you want to listen to me, if you want to appreciate it, you have to forget that I am a Rickshaw puller and you have to forget that you are a passenger. This is the kind of argument that Vedanta often uses to prove that Aham Brahmasmi. Fair enough, nothing wrong with it. What comes out of this statement and even from this statement son of God, like Jesus, Jesus the son of God? I cannot, I mean for the safety of others, cannot discuss many other religions. People take offence to it easily. Even if you say that, we are children of God, God is pure consciousness, if I am children of God, I have to be pure consciousness. That is we have to be one with God. Which automatically means that there is no creation. Because the entire discussion of Vedanta is very simple. The individuality that you are seeing, is it true? Or is it false? Here is my pen, I and my pen are two different things, we know it. A cow knows that the cow is separate from the grass, and that is why it eats the grass. Any ordinary person knows very well that he is different from the world. And that is why it says yusmat asmat pratyae gochara- युष्मदस्मत्प्रत्ययगोचरत्वं - the idea of me, the subject and the idea of the world, the object, it is eternally different like light and darkness. You don't need philosophy to know that these two are eternally different. However, forget about all these discussions that we are having, forget about the great statements of Vedanta, the simple thing that we often use Twameva Mata cha Pita cha Twameva, most Hindu kids know it since birth, which means Oh dear God, you are my father, you are my mother. That I am your child. If I am your child, I have to have your nature. If I have to be of your nature, I have to be pure consciousness. That is Jiva has to be related to Brahma in whatever form. Whether you call spark and fire, whether you call ocean and drop, or you call just oneness, what is the conclusion? There is no creation, because there is no separateness. Creation will always mean separateness. Creation means separateness. There cannot be any separateness. So there is no creation. Actually, the argument is very simple.

However , those who are gross materialists, those who do not believe in God, cannot even prove the non-existence of God. If you say that there is no existence of God, you have to prove, you have to do lots of things. They don't. Persons like Richard Dawkins, they go on taking examples from here and there to show that there is no God. What about Sri Ramakrishna? Do you call him raving mad? What about Swami Vivekananda? I don't think that Richard Dawkins is anyway more influential than Swami Vivekananda, who has touched millions of lives. And if Swami Vivekanada could influence millions of lives, if he could

change lives, I must know what his life philosophy was. His philosophy of life says that God is true. It is not only that Sri Ramakrishna is saying God is true, even his disciple who gave a major shake to India says that God is true. Why shouldn't I believe it? Look at his power, look at his majesty, look at the words of all the great masters who were in the past, should I believe Richard Dawkins and not believe these greats?

So it says, whenever you are discussing cause and effect you have to talk about the relationship between the creator and the created. And because we are not able to tell very clearly, it only proves that there is no creation. As I said, forget all these arguments. There is a very simple thing. If you believe in God, because at this stage you have to just believe in God. And when you go on practicing as you go deeper and finally when you realize God, you will know that God is true. When you study Physics, Chemistry etc you believe in the words of the teacher and that is how you proceed. It is the same with spirituality, you do not go on questioning everything when you enter a subject. You can keep those questions in the back of your mind. When the time comes you can test it. But if you go on asking from the beginning itself, you cannot proceed. One has to start with belief.

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स्वतो वा परतो वाऽपि न किंचिद्वस्तु जायते ।

सदसत्सदसद्वाऽपि न किंचिद्वस्तु जायते ॥ Karka 22॥

Nothing, whatsoever, is born either of itself or of another. Nothing is ever produced whether it be being or non-being or both being and non-being.

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It is a terrible blow to the theory of cause and effect. Nothing whatsoever is born, either of itself or of another reality, Nothing is ever produced, whether it be being or nonbeing or both being and non-being. Nothing is ever born. A pot does not give birth to a pot. Cloth does not give birth to cloth. And cloth and pot mixed together do not give birth to a pot.

When we talk about creation, when we say that such and such person gave birth to a son, he has a son, when we talk about this kind of creation, this appears only to foolish people. Not otherwise. Those of you, who have studied the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna would remember that once Sri Ramakrishna was talking to some of his devotees and slowly Sri Ramakrishna was entering one of his Bhava. When his mind would become extremely internalized and at that time somebody said that there is Saint Paohari Baba, he has kept a photograph of yours on the wall of his cave. And Sri Ramakrishna says that the photograph is of this shell. The body is like a shell. It is not born or anything. The photograph cannot be of mine. The photograph is of this external self. It's only the foolish people who think creation has been real.

Look no one is questioning creation here. Creation is very much there. The thing is, does that created thing, or created being have an individuality, a true individuality and is separate

from everything else? Because if it is connected then it is not creation. To be creation, as we normally understand, it has to be separate. You may say, what about a mother giving birth to a child, a baby. There is a separate being. Yes, but when once you start pushing things the way we have been pushing, then you realise that there can never be any creation. And that is why the idea of this, everything in this world , this is giving birth to that and that is giving birth to that, these are all notions. In reality nothing, no such thing happens.

That is why Vedanta was actually made for the monks. Because when you are living in this world, you cannot talk like this. Sri Ramakrishna illustrated this beautifully with the parable of a farmer who lost his son. And he was informed, he came and he did not shed any tears. And when his wife scolded him for being such a cold person, he said, look last night I had a dream in which I saw myself to be a king with seven sons. When the sleep broke everything was gone. I am just wondering for whom should I shed tears? For the one or for those seven. When we say a pot is created or a son is born, these are all Vacharam Varam Karnam, this comes in Chandogya Upanishad. Everything that appears before us, they are just Name and Form. Name and form are products of the mind. In reality nothing is created. Because, in reality if something had been created, the cause and effect relation would have been established permanently, perfectly and absolutely. That has not been done. What does this show? These are just word plays, just plays of name and form. Nothing more than that. And it gives a concluding blow. Anything that is Sat, through existence, it can never be born. If it exists, how can it be born? And if there is something , which is Asat, which does not exist, how can it be born? That's why Gita beautifully says नासतो विद्यते भावो नाभावो विद्यते सतः.

Sat, that is pure existence, can never cease to exist. Asat, which does not have existence, can never come into existence. So how can you even talk about something being born? Something dying? Sat is always existing so you cannot say that it was ever born. Asat by its very definition cannot be born. So who gets born? by whom?

Then you say, fine, what about the Sat Asat combination. No it cannot be because the same thing cannot have two contradicting nature. You cannot say that it is sat and asat both simultaneously. What about Kshanika Vijnana Vada? These things have become very popular in the west. America is a wonderful place. Takes up any idea and goes on shouting about it. Rudyeard Kipling's famous jungle book, talks about bandarlog , they will take up something that comes to their head, they will immediately catch and start jumping about it. I just read Sapiens by Yuval Noah Harari. I realised that this gentleman gives wonderful information but conclusions are hopeless. He also says Buddhism is the only futuristic religion, God knows why?

When Buddhists talk about Ksanika Vijnan Vada, that temporary consciousness, where it says that one moment you say it is there, and another moment you say it is not there, what

kind of philosophy are you discussing?. How can something that exists become non-existent? The experience of a person requires continuation, when I see something when I experience something it has to continue in my mind. You say one minute it was born, next minute it is gone. How can there be a continuation of memory?
Persons like Vijnana Vikshu and all they have answered all these but for us it is very simple: if a thing exists, it cannot be born and if thing truly does not exist, it can never be born and In either case, there can be no creation.

47. Is Awareness the proof of existence?

We have been discussing the reality of nature, reality of existence. The simple question is how real is real. How real is this pen that I am seeing? I am seeing it, so of course it is real. Mandukya Karika gets into this question. When you talk about this reality, just think of this pen. Does it have a real existence? Because the moment you say it has a real existence, it necessarily means that it has an absolute independent existence.
Now Western philosophy badly lacks the fineness of arguments that Indian philosophy has. Because Indian philosophy is far more deep. The problem with western philosophy is that they go on strictly by what they think and very often the thought process is that they are thinking and that itself is taken as philosophy. They do use logic but the depth of arguments and depth of perception that we have in the Indian system of thought is much deeper. This is true for both Astik Darshan and Nastik Darshan. Astik darshan are those that are based on the Vedas. Nastik are those who do not accept the infallibility of the Vedas.
Thus Bouddha darshan belongs to nastik darshan.
We were essentially discussing the nature of reality. Some of you may wonder, why do you need this? If you persuade a friend of yours, or somebody of your family to listen to one of these talks, I am sure that person will think that he or she has entered some kind of mad house.
Why are we discussing this pen? Because I know this pen. When Swami Vivekananda met the great American rationalist and realist Robert Ingersoll, who was quite old then, the famous argument Ingersoll used was, here is this orange and I am sure of this orange and let me enjoy this orange til I live. This is a very simple thing. Why do you need philosophy to understand this? If the world is there, good for it. If the world is not there, good for it. Why do you come disturbing me, because for me this world is there, understand this? Why go on discussing all this?

So, this world is very much there. The world is true for me. Why should I get into all these discussions? Because Vedanta is not a dry philosophy. Vedanta is a spiritual philosophy. And like every spiritual path, it is a way of life.

You might see a wonderful statement coming these days - Hinduism is not a religion, it is a way of life. What exactly they mean to say, I really can't understand. Because before you say hinduism is not a religion, it is a way of life, you please define what is a religion and what is way of life. If you say that , somebody founded it, well then science is no science, because science was not founded by any person. What about that? Science is no method of knowledge, simply because science was not founded by anybody? What an argument! And way of life do you mean to say that Islam is not a way of life for the faithful? Do you mean to say that Christianity is not a way of life for the faithful? See, these are all the desperate and concerted efforts by the really mischievous to discredit Hinduism, as if Hinduism is no religion. And what the Hindus have been practicing is false religion etc. and people don't even raise voice against it. What do you mean by it? Even learned people are telling this that Hinduism is not a religion. Then please explain what religion is. Everything that, every criteria that a religion has, Hinduism is mother of that, forget about following the criteria. A mother of that. Other religions were founded by one sage, Hinduism has been contributed by hundreds and thousands of sages. It is not only the mother, but grandmother of all religions. Grandfather of all religions. But no it has to be discredited, because if Hinduism stands on its majesty, other religions will lose their relevance. So Hinduism has to be cut down.

Every spirituality, every spiritual path is a way of life. Is that true of say western philosophy? Just name any of these, say let's say Spinoza, will you say that you can be there can be a way of life of Spinoza? No, it cannot be. Greek philosopher Epicurus founded Epicureanism and there was an Epicurean way of life. Epicurus himself was a very good sage but unfortunately his philosophy got diluted. People did not understand, and the conclusion was that eat, drink and be merry this is epicurean philosophy. But that is no philosophy. Any normal being wants to live like that, any animal lives like that, so what is so great about it? You will never say that there is an Aristotelian way of life. People do talk about platonic love but nobody talks about platonic way of life.

If you have to follow a way of life, spirituality is a must. Thus there can be and is a Vedantic way of life.

If you ask me, strictly with entire western philosophy, I don't mean any insult, I don't mean to hurt them and western people, they have money and power and you cannot really contradict them, Western philosophy is actually no philosophy. There was Saint Augustine, he was a philosopher, no doubt about it. He was trying to explain, but he was just trying to explain Christianity, trying to give a rational basis. So was Spinoza trying to do. But unless philosophy becomes a way of life, it is no philosophy. Just dry argumentation. It has no value

in Hinduism. You can say that there is some kind of knowledge bank, yes perfectly. Nothing wrong with that. They are trying to shed light on certain areas of which sometimes we may not even be aware of. It is perfectly alright. Nothing wrong with that. But philosophy no. Philosophy has to be a way of life.

Vedanta being a way of life, it says that, what you are seeing is absolutely correct but there will be occasions in your life, when you lose somebody dear, you want something dearly and you don't succeed, then there is pain, as Buddha said, everything is pain, those are the moments you start wondering if all this is true. If this all is real. This is one.

Secondly, most of us behave like excited kids. There is so much nervous energy within us, always trying to run, always trying to achieve something but some people amongst us love calmness. They love the quiet of thinking. And once they enter their realm of calmness, they realise that the reality that appears before us is not real. And more importantly the pain that we suffer, the tears that we shed, it is all because we are running after appearance. We are not trying to grasp reality, and the moment this idea strikes you, once this analysis becomes as Buddha said, everything is misery, that is when you start questioning things. Bhagwan Buddha, who is treated as an incarnation of God by the Hindus, Hindus are the only people in the whole world who even worship the person who was highly critical of Hindu religion. Can you imagine any other religion doing it? Even sects don't do it. Buddha denounced the vedas, buddha criticised the practice, and yet Hindus accept him as a sage.

Coming back to silent minds there are two kinds, one who sees pain in everything and there are people who are curious to know what lies beneath reality. Depending on what kind of mind you have, you will come up with different kinds of philosophy. And that is how we have Nayam Samkhya, Vaisheshika etc..

Mandukya Karika demolishes some of the philosophies. The last one that we were discussing was VijnanaVada of the Buddhists. According to VijnanaVada, there is some kind of temporary consciousness. And that temporary consciousness is passed on to the next temporary consciousness. And it is countered by saying that well it is perfectly alright, nothing wrong with it, but if you say that everything is temporary and consciousness is being transferred into the other, then it is like passing a baton during a relay race from one runner to the other. Just that in the case of the relay race the runner runs for a time. Now Buddhists do not define what is the length of the time i.e., duration. So VijnanaVada is unacceptable. Because memory will not be there unless there is continuity. Memory means continuity.

If you say that, they also have answers to this. And it is a very difficult thing and that is why people have to accept that particular philosophy which suits his mentality. And that is why you will find there is a very serious problem with the Christian world today. In the Christian world, because they don't have the variety, they have the Catholics, they have the Protestants, they have other sects also. But going simply by the philosophy, this philosophy

suits me, they have beliefs, this belief suits me, that belief suits me and they come challenging Hinduism.

For Hinduism, it is not that way. Hinduism runs strictly on philosophy. And then there was the problem with the realists where it was about cause producing effect in turn effect producing cause. And then it was about hen and the egg which came first. One probable solution was that they are eternal, cause and effect both are running simultaneously, eternally. Kind of like they are running in a cycle, the way seed and tree run continuously. And the realists object that the example of father and son, father producing son and son producing father is not correct. It should be more like a tree producing seeds and seeds producing trees. With this background we begin now verse 23

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हेतुर्न जायतेऽनादेः फलं चापि स्वभावतः ।

आदिर्न विद्यते यस्य तस्य ह्यादिर्न विद्यते ॥ Karika 23॥

The cause cannot be produced from an effect which is without beginning, nor is the effect born of its own nature (itself). That which is without beginning is necessarily free from birth

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It is a very simple and profound argument. Those of you who are lovers of literature would know that profundity of thoughts comes only when there is simplicity. Complex things do not make profound things. Simpler the truth, more profound are its implications.

हेतुर्न जायतेऽनादेः फलं चापि स्वभावतः । आदिर्न विद्यते यस्य तस्य ह्यादिर्न विद्यते ॥ - to remind you that Vedanta is attacked on its premise of Maya. But Maya will be explained later. With not only my due respect, but also with my humblest homage to the greats like Ramanujacharya, Madhwacharya, I really don't understand why they went to attack Maya. Because Advaita Vedanta is not about Maya. Advaita Vedanta is about Brahma. Pure consciousness.

In the earlier days British Parliament produced the best of Parliamentarians and their arguments were really of hugely high standards. When you look at contemporary politics, all over the world, you find that whenever politicians speak something, his opposition pounces upon him and the arguments these opponents use are often laughable. At least I find it ridiculous. There have been moments when I feel like writing somewhere that why do you use such arguments? If you really want to be very good at argumentation, first look at the basics, fundamentals of that system, then find out the loop holes and then put dynamite sticks there or as they say Rdx.. and the whole system will blow up. But when you are trying to find some weakness here and some weakness there, then it is an extremely bad form of argumentation. Vedanta always hits at the roots of the opponents and the opponents of Vedanta always hit at areas which don't even need to be hit.

If somebody comes and hits Vedanta telling that there is no Brahman, there cannot be any Brahman, there is no consciousness, well then you can argue. Because that is one of the

fundamental truths of Vedanta. Maya is not a fundamental truth. It is just a means to explain certain things. Vedanta always hits at the roots of the opponents. And says the cause cannot be produced from a beginningless effect. This is an effect and you say it is beginningless, so cause cannot be produced from it. Nor can the effect be produced from a cause. See both are running parallely like railway tracks they are moving. They are there supporting each other but never meeting. As far as railway tracks are concerned, they may be very good for transportation, they may be very good as metaphors for certain aspects of life, but when it comes to meeting ground for cause and effect parallel tracks do not explain that. You say that cause and effect may be parallel. In the case of the hen and egg, the seed and the tree, both are eternal, perfect. Nothing wrong with it. Sounds so great. But in that case cause will not be produced from the effect. Nor the effect will be produced from the cause. Often we are talking about cause and effect, but does cause and effect work truly in our daily life? Actually, no.

What happens is like an infinite series in mathematics.You cannot solve them, so what you do is that you cut a slice in between, solve it and apply it throughout. But that does not happen in philosophy. What works in Mathematics, may not work in Philosophy. So, neither can cause produce effect nor can effect produce cause. Because that will be a contradiction, because you are telling that cause and effect both are beginningless. They are going on since eternity. If they are going on since eternity, then cause could not have produced effect and effect could not have produced the cause. Mimamsa, the main philosophy of the Vedas, talks about body producing dharma, qualities and dharma good and bad, they ultimately result in body, so there must have been a beginning. You say no , they are running parallely. Then don't say cause and effect. If you don’t say, if you say there is no cause and effect then naturally you will have to become some other system of philosophy. And every other system of philosophy is being demolished here. On the one hand you say that you believe in cause and effect and then you say that cause produces effect and effect produces cause, and when challenged you say that they are beginningless. If they are beginningless, how can they be producer of each other? They cannot be.

What is the simplest way out of it? There is neither cause, nor there is effect - AjataVada. Unborn. There is no creation. Brahman alone exists. Whatever you are saying, it is in the mind. Frightening, frightening indeed. Believe me it is frightening.

Now Vedanta uses the arguments by VijnanaVada of Buddhists.

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प्रज्ञप्तेः सनिमित्तत्वमन्यथा द्वयनाशतः ।

संक्लेशस्योपलब्धेश्च परतन्त्रास्तिता मता ॥ Karika 24॥

Subjective knowledge must have an objective cause; otherwise both must be non-existent. For this reason as well as that of the experience of pain, the existence of external objects, accepted by other thinkers, should be admitted.

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The realists will not spare Vedantins so easily. They say, subjective knowledge must have an object for its cause. Otherwise variety becomes non-existent. Further for the experience of pain, the existence of external objects, accepted by the dualist scriptures must be admitted. **प्रज्ञप्तेः** - subjective knowledge; **सनिमित्तत्वमन्यथा द्वयनाशतः** - Subjective knowledge, the experience that we have through our senses and that is obvious. Here is this pen and this pen created some kind of sensation in me and then I get knowledge, that knowledge is subjective knowledge. This subjective knowledge depends entirely on the presence of objects. But not of a single object, mind it, but of many objects. Because there are many objects, that is why we have different kinds of experiences. Sometimes we enjoy something, sometimes we feel pain, that something the same thing cannot be producing all those things. Similarly what we experience are of different kinds. So, multiplicity is a fact, because we experience variety. The arguments used by realists are very interesting. If you talk to some of your friends , if you talk to your relatives, or those who profess to know a lot, they will be exactly using this kind of argument. Every materialist uses absolutely this kind of argument. There is variety in this world, when you eat, when you get different tastes, sugar is sweet, pickles are sour. Then you have bitter things, different kinds of tastes are there. Similarly through our olfactory glands we smell pleasant things, unpleasant things, bad odour etc. what does it mean? It simply means that there has to be variety. If there were to be no variety, then how could we have different experiences? What about pain? You put your hand in fire, you experience tremendous pain. That doesn't happen when you put your hand in water. Put simply, in my language, awareness proves existence. If you are aware of something, that means it exists. For a very long time I have been trying to write a monograph, on mind. It won't be a large work. Thing is that Patanjali's Yog Sutras have detailed every aspect of the mind. Those of you who have not listened to our talks on Raja Yog, i will request them to listen to our talks on Raja Yog , they are very good and you will get a very good and neutral, impartial and truly fair idea of mind. So it is difficult for anyone to write on mind that our Patanjali has not already tested 2300 hundred years ago. That is amazing.

However, what I am thinking of is to relate mind, time and space. Because mind is time, time is space, space is mind. That is what I believe I need to prove. Now one of the first statements is awareness increases eminence, i.e., importance. Here the argument by the realists is that awareness proves existence. Because there is existence, you are aware. But this is not really a fact. I am sure you will find the difference very interesting. When you become aware of something its eminence increases. For example, you are waiting for

somebody, you are waiting for a train, the train is delayed, now you become more and more aware of time. Because you become more aware of time, the eminence of time increases for your mind. Because its eminence increases, its existence becomes more and more real. So, you feel as if time is not passing. Which is very real here. Why? Because you know, it has become extremely eminent or prominent in our common language. Similarly when you are extremely busy, you lose track of time. Why? Because you are no more aware of time. The popular proverb out of sight, out of mind, is very true.

However, realists will talk exactly the opposite, they will say that, if it is there you become aware. Existence implies awareness. But here they are going in just the opposite way. Since you are aware of something proves the existence. So, **प्रज्ञप्ते** - Pragyan is being conscious of something. Sense knowledge. There are some technical terms. We are not getting into it. Already things are pretty complicated. What they are saying is that, we experience these things, we experience the variety, and since we experience the variety, that means there are a number of objects, there is variety in this world, you eat something, you eat say a biscuit, the biscuit may be crisp. The same biscuit, everything the same. Then you leave that biscuit in a humid climate for some time and its taste changes completely. And that shows that there is a variety. That is the main argument that realists and the materialists use against every other system of thought. So, realists say that there is no other way to prove it. This knowledge simply is not possible unless there is some kind of contact with the external world. There has to be contact with the external world. Which means there is variety. In fact they use this example that crystal has no colour of its own. You place flowers of different colours or different objects and crystal's colour changes. How does it change? There is a real connect between the flowers through light with the crystal. Unless there are different colours, the crystal cannot be of different colours. This is a very serious problem with thinkers. Very often what they do is, they see some phenomena in this world and from that they try to conclude something. Kids also have this problem. Kids and immature people have this problem. And immature philosophers have this problem. You see something and from there you conclude something and you apply it everywhere. Science suffers hugely from this problem. They see something, they conclude and they apply everywhere after some years they find that the whole thing was wrong. Those of you who are familiar with medical sciences, would know that how many beliefs were there in medical sciences which have been thoroughly proved to be completely wrong. And not only wrong, something which was considered to be correct has been proven to be the opposite.

Now this is being contradicted by saying that no, when you say that awareness proves existence and multiplicity of experiences, multiplicity of your inner emotions that get

produced by looking at certain things, by experiencing certain things, show that there is a variety in the world is completely wrong and based on wrong premise.

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प्रज्ञप्तेः सनिमित्तत्वमिष्यते युक्तिदर्शनात् ।

निमित्तस्यानिमित्तत्वम इष्यते भूतदर्शनात् ॥ Karika 25॥

From the point of view of logical reason a cause for the subjective impression must be assigned. But from the standpoint of the highest Reality or the true nature of things, we find that the (so-called) cause (of the subjective impression) is, after all, no cause.

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Actually this argument comes from VijnanaVada. This is a common practice in Indian system of thought when they have to counter some system of philosophy, not that they will always be giving their own, but they will sometimes be using the arguments of some other system of philosophy, counter that, and then they will take up this system. Suppose there is system A and I am system B. I want to contradict system A. I will not necessarily be giving arguments to counter A. There is system C, I use the argument of C to counter A. And then I counter C and demolish C. So both C is demolished and A is also demolished. Here VijnanaVada is being used to demolish the realists.

The dualists, by force of reason, say that there is a cause of subjective knowledge. Whenever there is subjective knowledge , there has to be a cause. But from the standpoint of the true nature of things we assert that this so-called cause is after all no cause.You say that there has to be cause and that cause will produce effect as far as I am concerned, or any living being is concerned. If there is some cause, it will produce some effect in my body. Sometimes it will produce pain, sometimes pleasure and sometimes it will produce certain kinds of sensation. Through those sensations, through those emotions you conclude that there is an external world and there is variety in this. VijnanaVada says no, we don't agree with that. What we wish to say is that actually there is no cause. If this is your argument, mind it, what VijnanaVada says and Vedanta accepts so basically Vedanta does not say that everything that Vijnana Vada is telling is wrong. They say that your ultimate conclusion is wrong. But some of the steps are perfectly alright and it says the same thing to Samkhya also. So what Vijnanavada says is that you are trying to prove realism. You are trying to prove the variety in the world. You are trying to prove the existence of the world, by the simple argument that I have a variety of experiences and if I have this variety that shows. We don't accept that as valid cause. And it gives long argument, which is not very difficult because we have been going through this argument.

It says that even in dreams very often it happens, even in dreams you experience certain things and you have the same kind of sensation, same kind of emotions. So to say simply that subjective experience that is awareness implies existence does not, it is not at all valid.

Because if it were true, in that case dreams which are ultimately internal phenomena they would not have produced this kind of sensations, this kind of feelings. You see that somebody is running after you with a gun, or with a knife and you see yourself running. Up to that is imagination, But the reactions produced in the body, like you start panting, you feel lots of things. You wake up scared. What about that? Like kids sometimes have nightmares and then they wake up shouting and crying. When I was a kid I remember one particular episode that it's time for me to go to school and I have lost my text and I am not able to find it. Then I will start crying and I would get up and start looking if my books and copies are there. I was barely six seven years old at that time. How do you justify that? How do you justify the dream of hunger, the dream of satiation, and experience every kind of thing in a dream? Although there is no object there, how do you ? So, there is absolutely no reality, which has any independent existence compared to the mind. Independent of mind there is no reality. This is what VijnanaVada says. According to VijnanaVada there is no external object. So Vedanta uses this argument and it will contradict VijnanaVada also at some point.

And what to say of dreams, even in the imagination body reacts.

I think I told you the story of one of my brother monks here. Very nice monk. He does argue at times, but is a very nice person. Once he had a dream, in which he was arguing with some brother mon and all of anger he probably slapped that monk and he felt so upset that he got up. The dream broke, It was a kind of nightmare. Because we can't even dream of slapping some brother monk. And that day he was going to Belur Math temple and suddenly thought of that incident (dream) and he was feeling very sad and suddenly his entire forearm for no reason got swollen as if hundreds of bees had bitten there. And he still tells that I behaved badly in dream. And had to pay for it. This is a very interesting thing that he did something in a dream, much later he was just thinking of this, and his body reacted. As if karma came to punish him. How do you justify this whole thing? There is no justification. So, subjective experiences can happen without the existence of objects. And without the objects impacting you.

The popular belief , the common idea that experiences, awareness prove that there are objects is not true. Moreover if you start analysing things as you go deeper and deeper, you find that the objects do not exist. It uses a very beautiful example that variety that we are talking about, multiplicity that we are talking about, is like that of a horse and a buffalo, you know that you are different, and there is no way that horse and buffalo can ever be same, but when you look at clay and the pot, you realise that actually pot is clay. Some work has been done on clay so it has become a pot. Essentially pot and clay are same. Similarly, think of my shirt. Resident texture, some colours etc etc, but what is it in essence? A piece of cloth. What is piece of cloth ? just threads. What are threads - cotton. Nothing else. As you

keep on moving backwards you start moving towards more and more fundamentals. As you move more and more towards fundamentals you realize that the variety decreases. Just think of clay and pot. There is clay and you can have a hundred different kinds of pots. Apparently in India we have different kinds of pots. Of course it must be there in every society, every country. And you realise that this variety is the product of the same clay. The same is true of gold and ornaments, jewellery. There is Gold and you have innumerable kinds of Jewellery. But what is jewellery? Nothing but gold. As you start pushing backward you realise that variety is a misnomer.

So variety itself is a misnomer. There is no variety. This is the answer given by Vijnana Vadis. So your standpoint that relationship between cause and effect can be proved simply by awareness is wrong. Because there is no variety. As you start pushing things more and more backward, you realize that ultimately there are around hundred basic elements.

There is a very beautiful book called " How to make an apple pie from scratch" by Harry Cliff. He has shown what are the basic building blocks of our universe. As the Carl Sagan had said, "If you wish to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first invent the universe" .The The author has given the entire history of Physics and gone back to electrons and protons and from there to quarks. How Galaxies are born and big bang and how matter escaped annihilation from fearsome heat of Big bang. And he has shown that whatever is in apple pie, what exactly makes an apple pie, where exactly lies the uniqueness of subatomic particles, that are really responsible for creation. That is very interesting like it says 200 years ago people would not have believed. It is a very simple thing. But before atoms were broken up, it was difficult not to believe in variety. And then Mendeleev organised the periodic table, and said whatever matter is in the world is made up of these basic elements. And they even predicted that these elements are not there. (Today the periodic table has 94 basic elements which are freely available on earth and 24 have been synthesised in laboratories or nuclear reactors.)

The periodic table says these are the only elements possible. And once the atom is broken, we find we do not even need so many elements. You just have a few fundamental subatomic particles and that is all the variety.

This is the beauty of Indian philosophy. Without going into all those big things like big bang and all those things and quantum physics and subatomic particles, very clearly said, take the case of clay and the pot and as you go deeper you realise that variety is a misnomer.

And whenever you have Bhranti darshana and you see things wrongly, when you imagine things, it has the same effect. You see a rope in darkness. You think it is a snake. And it produces the same kind of emotions within you and the kids, they see ghosts everywhere in darkness. And those imaginary ghosts produce the same kind of impact, what about that? You don't need variety to have emotions. Worse, variety itself does not exist in nature.

Because there is no external world. I love it every time this sentence comes “there is no external world”. Variety does not exist. Not because there are few subatomic particles, but because there is no external world.

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चित्तं न संस्पृशत्यर्थं नार्थाभासं तथैव च ।

अभूतो हि यतश्चार्थो नार्थाभासस्ततः पृथक् ॥ Karika 26॥

The mind does not enter into causal relation in any of the three periods of time. How can the mind be ever subject to delusion, as there is no cause of any delusion?

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The mind is not related to external objects or to the ideas that appear as such objects. This is so because objects are non-existent. This pen does not exist and the idea that appear as external objects are not distinct from the mind. What appears to you as external objects are actually in mind. This requires discussion and will be taken up next.

48. Buddhist philosophy is demolished

Before we continue, we would like to draw your attention to a very fundamental fact regarding Advaita Vedanta which I think I have explained quite a few times. And yet it requires regular thinking , regular contemplation, regular cogitating over it.

What exactly is Vedanta about? This is a very simple question. Now if you ask somebody what Vedanta is about, he will say Aham Brahmasmi. No it is not that. Vedanta is looking at the problem of the external reality, the world. What is this world? We had our great Raman Maharshi, who beautifully posed the question “who am I?”. So is Vedanta about who am I? No doubt. But here right now what we are discussing is what this world is? Because once you know what this world is. You will understand who you are. Because, in Vedanta, once the world is explained, your identity will get explained automatically.

Now if we look at the world of philosophy, what are the possibilities? The first one which is the most obvious is taken up by the realists. Now here I will tell you something very interesting. Someone wrote , in the previous talk, in the comments, and I okayed it. He said that the fellow who hasn't earned a penny in life, is criticising materialism. Now, I didn't want to answer. See, these people who are serial commenters, that is the only thing you can say, serial critics. Just like serial killers. They will just go on commenting without understanding what is being told.

When we discuss philosophy, materialism is a system of thought. according to which matter is the last word. Now this gentleman does not even understand that much. If by materialism you mean enjoyment of the world, Hinduism is fully for it, because Artha and Kam, these two

are fully endorsed in the view of life for the Hindus. The problem is that these listeners are here today listening to Karika, and commenting on something else. They have their own understanding .There is no understanding of this in most of the listeners. Most of it is a misunderstanding. They are totally confused between enjoyment, which is commonly referred to as materialism, with materialism as philosophy.

Materialism in philosophy says that matter is the last word. Everything has evolved from matter and everything will end in matter. Christian say from dust you have risen and to the dust you will go. No, we don't believe in all that. So, materialism is something which we instinctively know to be true. This world is very much there, it is real before us and Vedanta does not deny that. The problem begins with the reality of the objects that are there.

Before we proceed further, it will be a good idea to fine-tune some of your ideas. In Materialism, the so-called scientific outlook, it is based on the fact that matter is the ultimate reality. Everything is born of matter and energy , it is governed by cause and effect and everything ends in matter. So matter is the ultimate reality. And matter is a hard reality. This is one standpoint.

The second standpoint is about VijnanaVada of the Buddhists. VijnanaVada says that everything is an idea. VijnanaVada counters materialism and says that presence of something creates awareness. But do remember that you become aware of things in dreams and in imaginations also. The effect of those are absolutely the same as when you have in the waking.

The third outlook is the famous ShunyaVada of the Buddhists. They say the world does not exist. Nothing exists, there is no reality as such. Whatever they might mean, it's confusing. Some will say, the world is a dreamlike thing. God knows what it means. False like a dream.

Vedanta does not subscribe to any of these outlooks. Vedanta does not accept objects to be absolute, it does not accept our awareness of things as mere ideas. It does not accept the world as unreal, in the sense that we are imagination, and it does not accept, world as Shunya.

So what does Vedanta accept? Vedanta says that the objects are very much there. Neither these are mere ideas, nor these are dream-like things, nor do they have any absolute reality, independent reality. Whatever we are perceiving is actually pure consciousness. Pure consciousness appears as objects.

This is a very important thing. For example, when Sri Ramakrishna, in his visions while at the Dakshineswar Kali temple, described many times, when he saw pure consciousness and he also saw the objects. Even when he was worshipping mother Kali he would see there was pure consciousness everywhere. And he saw the divine mother was conscious, flower pots were conscious, and utensils used for worship were all conscious. So the objects are very much there. Yet actually they are pure consciousness. I am talking about just one

incident of Sri Ramakrishna's experience. There are hundreds of such. So this is the truth and Vedanta is not based on any speculation. It is not any theorising. It is based on absolute truth and what Gaudapada has done is he has just given a philosophical and logical frame to it. Please remember that objects are very much there, but they don't have any independent reality, they are not mere ideas, they are not dreamlike, they are actually pure Brahman, Brahman alone, they are Atman alone. Yet, they appear as objects, and this is Maya.

Vedanta says that actually there is no creation, the way creation is understood. When we understand, when we think of creation, when we say creation, we always mean something new has been created, and the new that has been created has an absolute and independent reality.

But according to Vedanta, the world doesn't have an absolute and independent reality. This is very important to remember. That is why the philosophy of Vedanta is known as VivartaVada. It is there, yet it is not there. It is there as Brahman, it is not there as objects. Now the arguments continue and these are believe me beautiful arguments. I hope this should make everything very clear.

The first argument was by the realist, materialist, who say that the objects are there and the objects created that awareness, like a crystal which has no colour, yet when a flower is kept before it, the crystal gets coloured by colour of the flower.

Now VijnanaVada, the idealists, counter it. They say that the mere fact that we are becoming aware does not prove the reality of objects, because we have awareness during dreams also and we have awareness during imaginations too. People who hallucinate also see reality. While travelling in the desert, sometimes people hallucinate that there is water. It is called mirage. They are very much the same, They see it. However idealists say that it is not only just about mirage, if you eat food during dream, your dream body is satiated. Which means that the mind that we use in the external world has just as much reality as the dream mind. The waking body has just as much reality as the dream body. And waking objects have just as much reality as dream objects. They serve their purpose in their respective state.

What Vedanta will do is, it will take the argument of VijnanaVada. It will accept the part of it and demolish the other part. In verse 25 and 26 , this is what was discussed. And says that idealist, KhanikaVijnanaVada, they say that the mind, the waking mind, just like dream mind is one with ideas. What you really experience is ideas. Actually those of you who are really interested, I will request you to listen to our Raja Yog talks and their Swamiji has explained how mind functions and ideas and objects. But that is only a working hypothesis. That is not the ultimate reality. The ultimate reality of the world as seen by Vedanta will be discussed now.

So, realists now try to corner the idealist. They say, you say it is all false knowledge, The moment you have false knowledge it automatically implies that there is real knowledge. It is a simple argument. If you say that there is Mirage water it means real water also exists. If you say there is a hallucination of something, it means that real object is also there.
There is a beautiful book "Phantoms in the brain" written by V S Ramchandran, a doctor and a scientist. There he describes how people hallucinate simply because their brains functions. There he describes a case, where a person has lost his hand due to an accident. But the brain centre that controls his arms is very much active. So he would go on shouting and screaming that his arm is itching etc. But there is no arm. So it took a lot of time for that person to recover. Slowly neurons are captured by the nearest organs, sense organs. Now this gentleman, he had arms, he lost the arm, and now he is getting false knowledge about his arm. What would you say about it? It is a very simple thing. In one particular case he mentions how one soldier, he was probably a soldier. He lost his arm and he kept on complaining that his arm is crawling with insects and he cannot bear it and it was impossible for him to sleep. He would keep on awake day and night. The doctor had some suspicion. The rule was whenever there was an amputation, those body parts were generally incinerated, and record was kept. These doctors went to find out what exactly happened to his arm. They found that his arm for some reason was not incinerated. And instead it was buried. I read this book some twenty years ago so I may not remember the details correctly but the overall idea is the same. The doctor was surprised. So they went and dug the palace where it was buried and they found his arm full of maggots. Ramchandran does not explain how it happened. But why was that person conscious of the fact that the arm was not incinerated? Very surprising.
Now we move on to the verses.
So, realists say that if there is false knowledge, it only means there is real knowledge. So if one sees something false in dream from the standpoint of the waking, it shows that objects are really there in the waking state. Idealists, VijnanaVada, now reply

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चित्तं न संस्पृशत्यर्थं नार्थाभासं तथैव च ।
अभूतो हि यतश्चार्थो नार्थाभासस्ततः पृथक् ॥Karika 26॥

The mind is not related to the (external) objects. Nor are the ideas which appear as external objects, reflections upon the mind. It is so because the objects are non-existent and the ideas (which appear as external objects) are not separate from the mind.

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It says that the mind is not related to external objects or to the ideas that appear as such as object. That means when I say here is my pen, my mind never touches this pen nor the idea that is conjured up by this object pen. This is so because objects are non-existent. Objects do not exist, this is what VijnanaVada will say. And the ideas that appear as external objects

are not distinct from the mind. Those of you might have heard of our explanation of Raja Yog, might remember, very often Raja Yog has explained ideas and thoughts as ChittaVritti. Thoughts are like ripple on the water which represents the mind. We have discussed this earlier. So while we say there is mind, and there are thoughts like ripples on water. But VijnanaVada would not accept this. They say mind is idea and idea is mind. So mind does not grasp the ideas, nor does mind grasp objects.

चित्तं न संस्पृशत्यर्थं नार्थाभासं तथैव च - Arth means objects. Abhas means the ideas, ideas represented by those objects.

The mind does get in touch with objects. In fact, even if you assume, that here is this pen and I am able to know this pen, the very idea that I know the pen means that somewhere they are connecting and if two things are connecting, there has to be something that connects them, something common. If you say that there is something third which connects then there will again be a fourth that will connect the one and two. Otherwise there is simple explanation, that Swami Vivekananda also uses, is that mind itself is matter, just extremely fine matter. Then it is possible.

However the problem remains. Is the mind absolute? And are the objects absolutely real? VijnanaVada says, no, there is no contact between mind and objects nor is there any connection between mind and ideas because neither exists. So it says mind does not touch objects, because there is nothing. This is VijnanaVada, mind it. And so there will never be the question of false knowledge and right knowledge. If the mind touches something then only you can say this is right and and it has not touched so it is false. Since objects are not there, ideas are also not there, how can the mind touch something? And if there was a touch, then you could have said that this is real or this is fake. For example, under normal conditions if you go to a psychiatrist, he will tell you, hallucination is when you conjure up, you think of something which does not exist. So from our standpoint you have seen something there is a real connection, there is a real touch, but for the same thing you say that there is no real touch, so that is false knowledge. Because if the mind touched the object, that means if objects were real in that case that knowledge will become absolute reality.

Knowledge is not absolute reality, Knowledge of objects comes when the mind creates the forms. Mind creates the forms and enjoys it. It creates the form in imagination , it creates the forms during hallucinations, it creates forms during dreams, and shockingly it creates forms during waking. The argument will continue.

Knowledge is not absolute reality, Knowledge of objects comes when the mind creates the forms. Mind creates the forms and enjoys it. It creates the form in imagination , it creates the

forms during hallucinations, it creates forms during dreams, and shockingly it creates forms during waking. The argument will continue.

I had read one book by a psychologist, he was working in a mental asylum. The gentleman, who was a great doctor in his reminiscences, was talking about one lady. That lady was pregnant and something went wrong with her and she lost her baby and doctors had said that she cannot have a baby any more. She completely lost her head and was admitted to the asylum. The doctor treated her and was narrating this to one of his friends who had come to visit him . The lady came and said, oh doctor, you know yesterday I gave birth to three beautiful kids. Triplets. And they are very healthy and good looking. The doctor congratulated her and she went away. Then the doctor tells his friend, look she is so happy in her make-believe world. in the real world , she will never be giving birth and she will always be upset. In this world she is happy. Why should I unnecessarily give her medicine and try to bring her out of that? Now this is a very complicated question, and has ethical questions and moral questions. We are not at all going into it, that is not our job. We are here just to say that, for that lady, the hallucination that she was having, or whatever it was, was as real to her as the waking world is for us.

There is an African tribe,who have discussions regarding their dreams, at the breakfast tables. They used to call it dreamfast or something like that. It was compulsory for everybody to speak out whatever they had dreamt last night. And it was an object of great discussion and there was a cartoon based on that. It says that look, our dreams are as real as your waking state is.

We are very fascinated by the questions and it arouses curiosity and their philosophical implications , most importantly they hint at certain kinds of spiritual reality. So well the verse no 26 Vijnanavada says just like your dream mind, waking mind also conjures up objects, You are thinking that it is there. If you say that there is some kind of continuity, that continuity stays in the mind too. Mind neither touches objects, because the objects are not there nor does mind touch ideas related to those objects because if there are no objects, how can there be ideas related to them? Buddhists say this. Okay, fine, there is no such thing, so when do I get my knowledge. Because Buddhists talk about knowledge, Buddhists talk about enlightenment, Buddha was the great enlightened. If it is all false, if it is all ideas of whatever kind, how do I get enlightenment?

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निमित्तं न सदा चित्तं संस्पृशत्यध्वसु त्रिषु ।

अनिमित्तो विपर्यासः कथं तस्य भविष्यति ॥ Karika 27॥

The mind does not enter into causal relation in any of the three periods of time. How can mind be ever subject to delusion, as there is no cause for any such delusion?

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This is number 27, a tricky verse. Since there was no such touch, mind never touched any object, so why do you talk about true knowledge, false knowledge. Just remember mind never touches any object, mind never touches any idea. So the question of right knowledge, false knowledge does not come.

Now comes Vedanta. VijnanaVada, that is Buddhists, established their theory, by using the analogy of dreams, saying how the very fundamental logic, argument of the realists, that the objects create awareness is false. Says

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तस्मान्न जायते चित्तं चित्तदृश्यं न जायते ।

तस्य पश्यन्ति ये जातिं खे वै पश्यन्ति ते पदम् ॥ Karika 28॥

Therefore, neither the mind nor the objects perceived by the mind are ever born. Those who perceive such birth may as well discover the foot-prints (of the birds) in the sky.

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Now VijnanaVada is being countered by Vedanta. And along with VijnanaVada, ShunyaVada is also being countered. This set of arguments is very interesting. Buddhists that is VijnanaVada as also ShunyaVada, they refused the existence of objects. ShunyaVada says there is nothing, nothing exists. It's all nihilism. You say that nothing exists, objects do not exist, even ideas do not exist, whatever is, is momentary consciousness and according to Shynyavada, even that does not exist.

And yet, these Buddhists believe in mind being momentary. Kanika Vijnana, momentariness. And that mind is non-self in nature. These are the fundamental things about VijnanaVada. Worse mind is filled with misery. Bhagwan Buddha says dukkham dukkham sarvam dukkham. It is famous. The entire philosophy of Buddhists is based on misery. You say that mind is momentary, it is non self, it is not conscious, and you say mind is full of misery. We have no objection to what you say. And you also say that there are no objects. The stand taken up by materialists and realists was countered by idealists.

Vedanta agreed to that part. And now Vedanta catches hold of VijnanaVada and says, it is wonderful, how wonderfully you prove that there are no objects, how wonderfully you prove that there are no ideas related to objects. But you also say that the mind is momentary in nature. It is non-self in nature. And you say that it is full of misery. Buddha's four noble truths, there is misery. Where do we experience misery? In mind, definitely. Where from this misery is coming? Either from the objects, or from your mind. You say that there are no objects. So misery is in your mind. Now the thing is how can these things be known? If mind knows nothing, if mind never knows anything, from the outside or inside. You people are saying that the mind knows nothing. It is just consciousness moving momentarily. And yet you say that there is momentary consciousness. How do you know that this is momentary? And how do you know misery? If this pen does not exist, I will accept it. I will say, well I am hallucinating. Sometimes people see ghosts and you say that you are hallucinating. Maybe

you are hallucinating, but you say that the world itself does not exist. And the ideas related to worldly objects do not exist. So knowledge is not possible. Knowledge itself is a misnomer according to KsankaVjnanaVada. Then how do you know misery? How do you know that your mind is momentary? And unless there is some kind of unchanging mind, permanent, how can you know the momentariness of mind? To know that something is moving one needs to be at rest. For example when you are standing on a platform and you see a train going past, because you are standing somewhere which is firm you see something moving. Unless there is something permanent how can you see that everything else is moving. How do you see the momentariness? Something has to be accepted to be at rest or at relative rest. So on the one hand you say that there is nothing permanent, everything is momentary. On the other hand when you say momentary, you have to accept that there is something , you are comparing the other thing with. Unless there is something with which you will compare with how can you know that it is moving? Even if you take, say Einstein's theory of relativity , where there is a general theory of relativity, where everything is relative, moving. So we also have two objects. Even if they are moving relative to each other there have to be two realities. And the point you think to be at rest. And then you measure the relative velocity of something. Exactly like that, there has to be something, which is permanent. Unless you know something you are standing on a base which is permanent, you won't know the momentary nature of the mind. And you say that the mind is born every moment. And he is full of misery. It sounds absurd and ridiculous. Every moment mind is born. Consciousness, or whatever is born. On the one hand you say that dukkham, everything is misery and you say that consciousness is born every moment, the way they say that one lamp lights the other. Basically ii is about getting born again and again and again. Every time it is born, it i s full of misery. Isn't it absurd? And yet you say that there is no witness. Misery compared to what? Momentariness compared to what?

Gaudapada adds nihilists are worse. KsanikaVijnanaVada is hopeless. Nihilists, ShunyaVada, they are worse. Why? In spite of the tangible world present before us, they believe in absolute non–existence of everything, including their own experience. Vedanta never said that this pen does not exist. This pen exists very much. This is the crux. Nihilists will say it does not exist. In fact nothing exists. What about your experiences? What about the knowledge based on which you are talking that nothing exists. In that case even that cannot exist, that is something very important.

If we just sum up, KsanikaVijnanaVada is countered by the simple argument that you say that everything is momentary. You need to have some permanent base compared to which everything else will be momentary, yet you say that there is no such thing, there is no witness, worse, you say that everything is misery. Misery is everything. Dukkha Samudaya as Lord Buddha said. You say that every moment consciousness is born which is full of

misery. Isn't it absurd? Because you say that you have to get out of it. And yet every moment , it is born with misery and yet there is no witness. As for Shunyavada, how can you deny this tangible world, the world that is there.

Now what about Vedanta? Vedanta says, these objects are very much there. The objects in dreams are very much there. But they do not have an absolute or real existence. Whatever you are perceiving is actually Brahman. Whatever you are perceiving is actually Satchidananda. Whatever you perceive is actually Atman, This perceiving of Atman as objects is Avidya. This perceiving of Atman as objects is Maya. This is Maya. So saying that nothing is there, no object is there, no idea is there, is absurd. Gaudapada says very beautifully that people, this VijnanaVada, these are the people who look for footprints of birds in the sky. The bird has gone flying past and you go and start looking for footprints.. And worse than them are these Nihilists - ShunyaVada. Who say that nothing exists. Why? That is what we explained.

This world is very much there. The objects in the dream world, they are very much there in that dream world. The thing is they do not have absolute reality. This is what we have to understand. Brahman alone exists.

The premise was that. This is what Karika wanted to prove that Brahman alone exists. Whatever is there, is Brahman alone. The pen is very much there. It doesn't have an independent existence. Its existence is just like a wave on an ocean. Doesn't have any independent existence. Sri Ramakrishna had once answered a very beautiful question that, It was just a way of metaphor. If you ask, how from consciousness, this gross world, which is so hard, can come? He said just like the way when male and female combine together and from something so soft and delicate, the body of bones etc come. So naturally , those who know science will say that genes, and this and that and different matter. The thing is it's through certain process of evolution that the semen which is supposed to be so soft, produces something which is so hard or a simple seed, any seed has to first germinate and for germination it has to become further soft and gives birth to Banyan trees and oak trees. So hard, mahogany. Yet they have come from seeds which are so soft. It is through a certain process of evolution but that is understanding the world. Sri Ramakrishna was talking and he was just giving an example to make you understand that this is possible. So,now it concludes.

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अजातं जायते यस्मात् अजातिः प्रकृतिस्ततः ।

प्रकृतेरन्यथाभावो न कथंचिद्भविष्यति ॥ Karika 29॥

(In the opinion of the disputants) that which is unborn is said to be born. For, its very nature is to be ever unborn. It is never possible for a thing to be other than what it is.

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अजातं जायते यस्मात् - the cause that is Brahman, from which the birthless mind is asserted by the dualists, can never born as it itself is unborn because Brahman is ever unborn, therefore it is never possible for it to be other than what it is. English translation as usual is something difficult to understand. What it means to say that dualists, every dualist, particularly the Samkhya, believes that Prakriti is real, and believes that mind has an independent existence. From objects we have come down to mind. Does mind have any independent existence? Mind as we understand. Dualists believe that mind is birthless and is born of Brahman which itself is birthless. Now if mind is birthless, eternal, like Prakriti, (and Samkhya believes Prakriti also as eternal) it has to be one with Brahman. You cannot have two infinities. Those who have some idea about mathematics, you will know that you can have many infinites. For example if you just look at the set of numbers 1,2,3,4 5 … is infinite and if you take the set of even numbers 2,4,6,8…this is also infinite and if you take the odd numbers 1,,3, 5 ..they are also infinite series. If you take the set of prime numbers they are also infinite. So, you can have too many infinites in the same infinite series. But, that cannot happen as far as consciousness is concerned. You say that there is Brahman, which is birthless, and it gives birth to mind, which is again birthless, and birthless is coming out of birthless, that is not possible, because you cannot have two infinities. You might ask what about that mantra ॐ पूर्णमदः पूर्णमिदं पूर्णात्पूर्णमुदच्यते ।पूर्णस्य पूर्णमादाय पूर्णमेवावशिष्यते। ॐ शान्तिः शान्तिः शान्तिः ॥ ? Yes, It is very much true because when you are seeing this world, it is about the Brahman, which is the cause, and which is the effect. It is to lead a student from that point, first it says that look, this world is not something different from Brahman, that means it is not finite. It is equally infinite. And when you take this world, as an effect from the Brahman, Brahman does not become less. It is to show that Brahman is infinite and what has come out is also infinite. And from there slowly they will take you to show that creation as we understand, as we see, it is not that way. It is always Brahman, just that we see it that way and that is why it is called ignorance, that is why it is known as Maya. The conclusion is Brahman never gives birth either to objects or to mind, to no one. Neither Prakriti is born, neither the world is born. It always remains Brahman in every condition. So, the idea that, Chitta, the mind, that itself is Brahman and it is born, basically implies that mind is in Brahman and it is born. This is contradictory in terms. This Vedanta takes up all the possible philosophies and contradicts them thoroughly to say that there never was any creation, When Vedanta says there never was any creation, it does not go the ShunyaVada way. It goes by BrahmaVada way. Bhgawan Buddha never intended to say that it is ShunyaVada. The philosophers, because they wanted to prove their identity, took arguments to such a level that ultimately they ended up telling that Nirvana is Shunya. And then came some scholars from the west and they

started telling that because Buddha has used Nirvana and Nirvana is there in Gita, and so Gita is after Buddha. I wonder where they get these kinds of brain waves. Why could not Buddha take these ideas from Gita? . Because Nirvana is a very common term in the Indian tradition. Simply because Buudha is using so Gita to become later than Buddha is an absurd statement!

There is ShunyaVada and some critics of Vedanta like the Christians say Advaita is MayaVada. Advaita is not MayaVada, Advaita is BrahmaVada. Brahman alone is true, everything else is false. There is no birth, there is no death, there is nothing else , there is no duality, there is no misery. These things are mere appearances. They are very much there but they don't have any absolute reality. And that is why Kathopanishad will beautifully put it - "nityo nityanam cetanas cetananam eko bahunam yo vidadhati kaman".

One has become many. How can one become many? And the eternal emits the non-eternal. If you continue to be with the non-eternal, you will keep suffering as Buddha said everything is misery. So search for the permanent and then you realise that.

When we are talking about absolute and the relative there is no relative, there was never any relative, that is the beauty of Vedanta. It very much accepts the relative, yes it was there, it is there till you are here. Till you are in this relative world, you cannot say that it is relative. Only when you have reached you will realise that it was never there, It was always Brahman, nothing else. Everything is Brahman as Sri Ramakrishna saw. The idol of Mother Kali is conscious, flower pot is conscious, utensils are conscious, floor is conscious, everything is conscious. The objects are very much there. But they do not have the reality as the materialists will make us believe. They are not mere ideas as Buddhists will make us believe nor is that they do not exist as Shunyavada will make us understand. This is what Karika has done, Karika has proved.

Karika says **अजातरूपाया प्रकृतिस्ततः प्रकृतेरन्यथाभावो न कथंचिद्भविष्यति** - How can something which is unborn which which is birtheless can ever be born? It is not possible.

The nature of reality is in the form of the world. To simplify further, here is this pen, does it exist? According to dualists (Samkhya, Naya, Vaisheshiska) this is very true. Prakriti got modified. Prakriti is a technical term. Prakriti is prakriti and should not be translated as nature. This was contradicted, earlier if you remember, beautifully said, you say that it is eternal and yet you say it is modified, how is it possible? Then you say that it does not exist as in ShunyaVada. Well it very much exists. It is a tangible world. How can you say it does not exist? Then comes VijnanaVada which says it is an idea perfect, we have no issues with that, The problem is you further say that everything is momentary. There is no witness. And everything is dukkha. How do you relate these two? You cannot.

What does Vedanta say, yes objects are very much there but not as objects they are there is Brahman, Those who have read the famous story of Sri Ramakrishna, where he says Taka Mati, Mati taka, (gold is earth and earth is gold). he did not mean to say that gold is earth. Not at all. He says as Brahman, there is no distinction between Gold and Clay. What is clay is gold, what is gold is clay. There is no difference. As objects they have no reality. As Brahman, they are the same.

But what about the real world, the world in which we exist. Sri Ramakrishna says he got worried that he is like that, he is throwing away everything, Mother Laxmi will get angry with him. So he says O Mother Lakshmi, you stay in my heart. It is very very important. When Sri Ramakrishna says Taka Mati, mati taka that gold and clay are all the same. How can they be the same? No they are not. They do not have any existence from the standpoint of Vedanta as absolute and real. But in this relative world, they are very much there . Sri Ramakrishna was a person who wanted Vedanta the truth and the only truth. The relative world is just like a ladder, which is not the ultimate truth. That is what he meant to say.

49. Waking State is not special

So we have covered a great distance. We have covered lots of ideas in Mandukya Karika. And we are practically towards the end. Just to remind you what exactly we are discussing. You may recall that we started with explaining what Vedanta is. We have discussed some of the main arguments used by Vedanta about itself and towards others. Here, we have been discussing the idea of whether the world is real.

Now one big problem in studying any system of philosophy, is that sometimes they use certain terms which have special connotations. They have very special meanings and those words have entirely different meanings in common parlance. So, because of that it is very important that you understand exactly what the writer of a Philosophy book means when he uses a particular word. Here we are using the word “real”. The technical terms for it in our Upanishads, in Vedanta is Sat. Sat means that which exists. So, it should be translated more as existence. Does not matter, even if we are using the word “real” for existence, it is good enough. The thing is that “existence” has its special meaning. Sat has its special meaning. And real has its special meaning. When I am talking to you just like that, I may say that this pen is real. It is not imagined. For you also this pen is real. But when we discuss philosophy, real means something that existed in the past permanently, is present now and will continue to be present in the future. That means time should not limit it. Space should not limit it. It is here, it is there, it is everywhere. Even if you let go of space which of course we cannot but

time is compulsory. For a thing to be real, for a thing to be sat, it must have existed in the past, continues in the present and has to be there in the future.

Now the realists or the materialists consider nature to be real, mind to real. For example, science says that the mind is real. Now we have answered those questions. And some of these will continue. In the second chapter there are many arguments given against the materialist and realists. And those things are being consolidated now. The discussion, that is, arguments and counter-arguments, were mostly directed at the dualists, who consider two entities as real. For example Samkhya considers Purusha and Prakriti, consciousness and matter, consciousness and energy, to be real. so these are eternal. So mind becomes eternal. For Nayaikas, (followers of Nyaya philosophy), mind is with Brahman, Atman, and they consider mind to be conscious.

That will be countered here. And in verse no 29, it was said that the nature of Brahman, the properties that we understand of Brahman is not with the mind. So you cannot say that these two are one and the same. On to verse no 30

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अनादेरन्तवत्त्वं च संसारस्य न सेत्स्यति ।

अनन्तता चाऽऽदिमतो मोक्षस्य न भविष्यति ॥ Karika 30॥

If the world be admitted to be beginningless (as some disputants assert), then it cannot be non-eternal. Moksa or liberation cannot have a beginning and be eternal.

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If you say that the world alone is real, that has been countered earlier. That is not acceptable. If you say that consciousness and matter, both are real, and this world is the interplay of consciousness and matter in which both of these are eternal. For in Samkhya, consciousness and matter are like two streams , running eternally, till eternity. Whenever they meet, there is creation. And then they will say that consciousness is individual. So it is a stream of consciousness. Now stream of Consciousness has come in Buddhism also. And the previous talk was on demolishing Buddhism. Any philosophy which is dualist has these limitations. And Buddhists who are not dualists, have certain problems which we are discussing in this talk. Now if you say that this world is also eternal, then there will be two very serious problems.

Vedanta is here countering the dualists. According to dualists, there will be two realities. The most important of these dualistas are the Samkhya whose philosophy has been taken up by Yog, that is consciousness and matter,energy. Matter and energy are the same. So, consciousness and matter are like two streams, not parallel. Two streams running independently. Once in a while coming together and there is creation and then they separate again. The serious problem with this will be that the world will never cease to exist because Prakriti is eternal. Now you certainly might bring some argument here regarding this, please keep in mind we are discussing Vedanta vs Samkhya. If Prakriti is eternal, it

means it was there in the past, it is there now and it will continue to be , in that case the world will never cease to exist.

Now these philosophies, Samkhya and Yog , are based on the Vedas, this is a very important thing. Absolutely crucial and central to our argument. Buddhism is not, Islam is not. Some other philosophies are not. Materialistic philosophies they are not. So we are not discussing that. We are discussing only Samkhya and Yog or any other dualistic philosophy, like Naya. Since Smakhya is based on Vedas, and Vedas talk about Mukti, liberation. Now what you are saying will go against the Vedas. Veda is all about Mukti, Veda is all about getting out of this cycle of birth and death. But Prakriti being eternal, the world will always be there, the universe will always be there. It may go away but it will come back. And worse, Moksha, that is liberation, will become a caused entity. That means it will have a beginning. Because it is a caused entity, it cannot be eternal. It is a very tricky argument but a profound and a sublime argument. Believe me. I am not really a student of philosophy but I have dabbled a bit here and a little bit there. And I can say that you cannot have a better philosophy than Vedanta. Vedanta says that anything that is caused, means it has a beginning. Now, Samkhya says that, once Purusha, that is soul, Atman, realises its true nature , it will attain freedom. That means freedom was caused at some point of time. If it was caused at some point of time, and before that it was not existing. That means by its very definition, Moksha is not eternal. Because for something to be eternal, it has to be there in the past, present and future. So, Moksha is caused. If Moksha is caused, then it cannot be eternal.

Now, they bring concepts like Abhava. Now Abhava plays a very important role in philosophy. Abhava means non-existence. Simply said it is like for example here is this pen and I say that there is not an elephant. This is Abhava. In certain philosophy it is considered to be just one of the knowledge that we get through our senses, but in Vedanta, this is an independent method of knowledge. Here is this pen, I break it completely into pieces, the pen is destroyed, Now this destruction is permanent. But this destruction is caused. Yet the destruction is permanent. So if Vedanta says that if something which has been caused cannot be eternal, it is countered. But to the mind this is an Abhava, this is an absence. But Moksha is not an Abhava. By its very definition, by its very nature, it is something which is real. So these things play a very important role. You cannot compare a positive thing with a negative thing. Thus if this world is real, if the mind is real, then the world will never cease to exist and Moksha, which is the ultimate aim which all Vedas and Upanishads have set, that itself will become non-eternal. When we use the words Mukti, liberation, freedom, it means that you are liberated forever. But Prakriti being there, you can always be trapped once again. The very definition of Moksha will be compromised forever. IThis is what Acharya Shankar says in his commentary.

If as the dualists contend, the world is beginning less, like the mind is beginningless, then it cannot be called eternal. Moksha cannot have a beginning and at the same time be eternal. As Moksha is eternal you cannot say that it has a beginning. These are the two major problems that come before us if we consider the mind to be eternal. If we consider the world to be eternal.

And the problem does not stop here. It continues. Mandukya Karika brings two verse from what have had seen earlier

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आदावन्ते च यन्नास्ति वर्तमानेऽपि तत्तथा ।

वितथैः सदृशाः सन्तोऽवितथा इव लक्षिताः ॥ Karika 31॥

That which is non-existent at the beginning and in the end, is necessarily so (non-existent) in the middle. The objects we see are illusions, still they are regarded as real

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Mandukya Karika says if a thing was not there in the past and if it will not be in future, then its existence in between is questionable. In Gita this argument is used in a different way. Before my birth I did not exist, after my death, I will not exist, so why bother for some few years. Mandukya Karika takes it one step forward and says I was not there before my birth, I will not be there after my death, so what proof is there that I exist in the present. Dear Listeners if you think deeply you will realise that it is something very deep, profound. Moksha which was caused according to the dualists and cannot be eternal. In that case there is no Moksha, no Mukti, and it kind of becomes a state just like waking state, dream state and dreamless state. Forget about being eternal, forget about being giving you joy and all those things and Nirvana and all those things, it just becomes a state of mind. In fact DvaitaVadis i.e., the dualists like Madhwacharya they use this kind of argument against Advaita and say when you go into Samadhi even if you call it Nirvikalpa Samadhi and you are back from there, you are back to this world. So Nirvikalpa Samadhi is just a state of mind, just like any other state of mind. I don't know why Madhwacharya was using this kind of argument, because it does not stand to reason. In fact Madhwacharya himself does not stand to reason. I cannot argue with great philosophers, great teachers of philosophy but it is so simple. Once you have realised oneness, there is nothing to argue.

The great masters, the sages who were there in the past, realised the oneness.They told it to their disciples. Just think of Sri Ramakrishna. Those of you who have studied the life and words of Sri Ramakrishna know that he had Nirvikalpa Samadhi, he realised oneness and he talked about that oneness often, not always. Because there was a state which was beyond mind and there was a state which was within mind. So, when you are talking of waking state, dream state, dreamless state, these belong to the realm of mind. And Moksha belongs to the state which is beyond mind. Now once you have known that and you come

back, there is no problem there. Then you have realised that these are one particular kind of state, but that is an entirely different kind of state. Like those of you, who know a bit of physics, would know that we have three states, solid state, liquid and gas. There is a fourth state which is known as Plasma. It has absolutely no relation with these three. Water can be in all these three states. Solid liquid gaseous. Water cannot be in a Plasma state. Now when we are using these examples it does not mean that we are trying to prove something with the help of those examples. For example, I have no realisation yet, but have some basic ideas, without which I cannot talk on the subject. Now suppose I get down to writing whatever Sri Ramakrishna experienced and spoke, I will try to be as rational as possible. I will try to bring in as many arguments as possible. This is the problem of books like Gaudapada's Karika. Gaudapada was a great sage. He, his teachers had that knowledge of oneness. Now he is trying to put all these things into arguments which is an impossibility. You are trying to make a common man understand what plasma state is. They cannot understand because it is an entirely different thing. It is something that does not belong to this world. On this Earth, you don't even come across this plasma state. And if Moksha is just a state, like waking and dream, then Moksha is an illusion. In that case the Vedas and the Upanishads all become illusory. And Moksha and even devotional literature become illusory.

If you accept that the world is eternal, world has been continuing with God throughout, mind has been continuing, time has been continuing, that means you accept Raja Yog as a correct philosophy, Yog as a correct philosophy, you accept Samkhya as a correct philosophy, you accept dualism as a correct philosophy. But in that case, the scriptures (Vedas and Upanishads) on which these philosophies are based, will become invalid. Vedanta that is Advaita Vedanta is countering dualism and shows how they do not conform with the basic scriptures.

So the dualists conclude that Moksha is not eternal. But Moksha is actually eternal, and that means, there never was any bondage, which means mind never existed and you are ever free. This is mind boggling and this is not counterintuitive.

But that would mean that the suffering of the poor and the enjoyment of those who are having a great time, are actually illusory. These suffering and enjoyment are much true for persons who are identifying themselves with mind. But in reality this is not true. This is one serious allegation that is made against Advaita. Do you mean to say all those people who are suffering in this world, those who have become orphans, those who are suffering atrocities, it is all mithya ? No it is not mithya, why should it be mithya? If your sense of "I" is true, then that is also true.

The person who is seeing it, if his sense of "I" is true, then that suffering is also true. And this is what Vedanta says that the person who is suffering and the person who is watching, both

of them need to realise first that the mind is illusory. They need to realise their oneness with Atman. Then the person who is watching and the person who is suffering both of them will realize that the suffering itself is an illusion. But staying within the mind you cannot say that. So we discussed how Samkhya bases its arguments on Vedas and takes up such a stand that the arguments go against the Vedas. And that is not acceptable. On the one hand you are using the word suffering. This word suffering is directly based on the mind. It is related to the mind. If mind is true then suffering is true. The person who is suffering, for him it is true; the person who is watching for him suffering is true. But the person who has gone beyond it, he will not see it that way. He will see these as an illusion.

But that person is suffering. He is feeling the pain. For example you might have seen kids get nightmares. Kids start crying in dreams. So, parents sometimes wake them up. Just like that when people suffer a lot, these masters feel that oh this person is having a lot of nightmares. Let me wake him up. People who are having a great time. Persons who have lots of wealth and are into enjoyment, they are having beautiful dreams. They don't want the dreams to break. And that is why religion comes easily to people who are suffering. Religion cannot come to people who are having a gala time. If you are having a gala time, if everything is really going great with you, if you are enjoying life then accepting religion is difficult for you. Because it is like enjoying a very good dream. But no doubt it is a dream, this world is like a dream but it is an enjoyable dream. You don't want to wake up. The teacher will say Okay, continue with the dream, but if you start suffering and suffering becomes acute, then the teacher wants to wake you up. All these scriptures are meant for that. To wake you up.

आदावन्ते च यन्नास्ति वर्तमानेऽपि तत्तथा - So, if a thing is non-existent in the beginning and in the end, it is necessarily non-existent in the present. The objects that we see are really like illusions. Yet we see them as real. This is what the mind does. Things that do not exist appear to be real. On to Karika 32

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सप्रयोजनता तेषां स्वप्ने विप्रतिपद्यते ।

तस्मादाद्यन्तवत्त्वेन मिथ्यैव खलु ते स्मृताः ॥ Karika 32॥

The serving of some purpose by them (i.e., the objects of waking experience) is contradicted in dream. Therefore they are doubtlessly recognised to be illusory (by the wise) on account of their having a beginning and an end.

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The utility of the objects of the waking experience is contradicted in dreams. Therefore they are certainly unreal. Both experiences have a beginning and an end. This verse was also discussed earlier in the second chapter. So, this verse 31 and 32 says that the objects that

we see in the waking state, that is perception by the mind, appear to be real. But the fact is they are as unreal as the objects of a dream.

Arguments will now begin. Some of these arguments were used in the second chapter when we were discussing the second chapter and some arguments will be given here also. So these two ideas, coming from the second chapter, say that remember if mind is real, if this world is real in that case world will continue to be real forever and also liberation, Moksha, it would be a caused entity. If it is a caused entity anything which is a caused entity cannot be eternal.

One very important argument as far as Moksha is concerned, said to be no amount of religious activities, that is rituals can give you liberation. No scriptural study , no amount of Japam, Dhyanam cannot lead you to mukti, because these are caused. If Moksha is an effect of these causes in that case Moksha will become non-eternal.

Moksha, liberation is eternal. We are already free, we are always free, we are just thinking that we are bound. This is what Mandukya Karika is trying to make us understand: that you think that you are bound , but actually you are not bound, you are always free, you will continue to be free. Give up this solution and wake up.

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सर्वे धर्मा मृषा स्वप्ने कायस्यान्तर्निदर्शनात् ।
संवृतेऽस्मिन्प्रदेशे वै भूतानां दर्शनं कुतः ॥ Karika 33॥

All objects cognised in dream are unreal, because they are seen within this body. How is it possible for things, that are perceived to exist, to be really in Brahman which is indivisible and homogeneous.

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Now begins a series of arguments, through which it is shown that the waking state is as unreal as dream state. So, all entities seen in dreams are unreal, because they are perceived inside the body. Inside the mind. When we sleep we see that we have gone to that place, we see that we have met this person, but everything is within this mind, in a limited space of our body . So here I am sitting in Kolkata, and I dream that I have been in Delhi, how can that distance be squeezed within this body? It is not possible. So we say that it is unreal.

How it is really possible to exist in Brahman, which is indivisible and homogeneous. AjataVada, that is there is no creation is being further explained.

The important thing is that, whenever we say that the dream is illusory we say it from the standpoint of the waking state. Had there been no waking state, there would never be the idea of illusion as far as dream is concerned. For example, you might have heard of people who are maintained a semi-coma or coma state for many years. We don't know exactly what happens to them in that state. They must be thinking something, they might be dreaming something and they will never know that it is all unreal. For them it is real, very much real. If

you sleep for a longer period, your dream continues for a longer period and reality of dream continues for a longer period. And the second thing that you realise, is that it takes place within a body because dream takes place within the body so you think that it is false. Because of the hugeness of an elephant cannot be confined within my body and hugeness of distances cannot be confined within my body.

But what is waking state? You might remember when we began our talks, really in the beginning, and there we were discussing three aspects of Brahman. And we talked of Virat. Virat is consciousness, pure consciousness which identifies itself with the sum total of the gross bodies in the universe.Virat. It is God. It is one aspect of God. Sum Total of gross bodies, not only of this Earth but of the entire universe. What happens during waking state? Things are happening within the body of Virat. Think of two people. For example, think of yourself and me, we are two different persons. You can easily, since you are watching me, you can distinctly think of me and you. Whatever I am dreaming is different from what you dream, isn't it? Your dream is your personal experience which we will discuss again. Your dream is a personal experience, my dream is a personal experience. Now it cannot be that in my case it is false and in your case it is real. Dream is illusory in my case as also in your case.

Now it was described in the beginning that some total of the gross bodies identifying with consciousness, is the other way consciousness identifies with the gross bodies. Everything is happening within this body isn't it? Think of yourself and God, instead of me, now you think of God. This sum-total of gross bodies , whatever is happening, here I move this pen , where is this pen moving? Within the body of Virat. Does it have a real existence then how can it be because this too is moving within the body of Virat. The most important argument is squeezed within the body. So, waking state, my waking state, your waking state everyones waking state is squeezed, within the space of the body of Virat. And by similar argument waking state has to be as unreal as illusory as dream. What is dream to me is waking state to Virat. So ultimately it cannot be real. For a thing to be real it cannot be within anyone’s body, within my body, within your body, no one's body. And these cannot exist within the body of Brahman because Brahman is not a compound.. Brahman is homogeneous, consciousness is homogeneous. So, you cannot expect the body of Brahman to have this microphone and this pen, this is not possible. So it is the consciousness which associates itself with the sumtotal of gross bodies. Existence lies there. So all these existence did not belong to consciousness. Actually they belong to the gross body of Virat. And these are as unreal for the simple reason that these belong to within the body of someone. The important characteristic of dream belonging to a particular body was discussed and based on that it was shown how waking state also takes place within the

body of Virat.

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न युक्तं दर्शनं गत्वा कालस्यानियमाद्गतौ ।
प्रतिबुद्धश्च वै सर्वस्तस्मिन्देशे न विद्यते ॥ Karika 34॥

It is not possible for a dreamer to go out in order to experience the (dream) objects on account of the discrepancy of the time involved in such journey. Again on being awake, the dreamer does not find himself in the place (where he dreamed himself to be).

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It is not reasonable to think that a dreamer actually goes out in order to experience the objects seen in the dream. No one goes out to what they once saw in the dream. Because of the discrepancy of the time involved, earlier it was space involved, now it is time, no one takes such a journey when awakened.to find himself in the place seen. The first one was based on space. Now it is based on time. Assuming that when you are dreaming you went out. How can you go out? How can you cover such long distances in such a short time? More importantly when you wake up you don't find yourself in those places. So the notion of time and notion of space is illusory in dream. Brahman transcends time, something we have explained many times. Brahman is beyond mind, Brahman is beyond time. So the idea that one can attain Mukti after death by going to this loka and that loka, and to Brahma loka etc. is all erroneous. Those who have studied Gita, particularly eighth chapter, says that people who do noble acts go to Brahmaloka and from there they can attain mukti. People who have intense devotion in Bhakti Sastra say that Brahman is beyond time and space. So the idea that due to some noble acts you do some great sadhana and you go somewhere after death and wait there and after a particular time you will get Mukti is erroneous. Because in Brahman there is no time, no concept of time. So the idea that you can have Mukti after a set period is meaningless.

But there are people who love God, there are people who expect that God will grant them Mukti. How does it happen? It happens because there is no bondage. It happens because there is no loka. Now when we say that there is no loka, say like Brahmaloka we mean to say that in reality they do not exist. These are all manufactures of the mind and the mind itself is unreal. Because the mind is unreal, all these ideas, although they appear to be real but actually they are not real. When you look at time and space from the standpoint of Brahman, they are all unreal. The problem is that we are looking at time and space from the standpoint of mind.That is why time and space appear to be real. And when we compare this real time and space with the time and space of the dream state we feel that dream state is unreal. The same thing happens, anyone a Brahmajnani a person who has realised Brahman, a person who has Nirvikalpa samadhi, when he looks back he realises that time and space of the waking state was as unreal as the time and space of the dream state. But then this creates very serious problems.

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मित्राद्यैः सह संमन्त्र्य सम्बुद्धो न प्रपद्यते ।
गृहीतं चापि यत्किंचित् प्रतिबुद्धो न पश्यति ॥Karika 35॥

The dreamer on being awake, realises as illusory all the conversation he had had with friends etc., during the dream state. Further, he does not possess, in the waking state, anything which he acquired in dream.

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It says, the dreamer after waking realises the illusoriness of the conversation he had with friends etc. during the dream. Sometimes you might see that you are having conversation with friends and you realise that was nothing as such. Further he does not possess in the waking state anything he acquired while dreaming. You can dream of having achieved this, having achieved that, but when you wake up, you find that there is nothing. Now, this actually creates a very serious problem. And it is your acquire something and when you wake up you realise that it is not there. What about scriptural discussions? We are studying all these. People practice rituals , people study scriptures - aren't they also unreal? Because the conversations that you had in dream state, you realise that they are of no use when you wake up. If this world is unreal, then what happens to all these scriptural studies etc.? Indeed it is all unreal. In fact this problem has been taken up by Shankaracharya while commenting at a different place. He says, "Why is it needed?" He said people who are ignorant, people who do not want to get into spiritual life, for them scriptures are meaningless. And those who have realised it, for the also it is meaningless. There are people who want to attain knowledge of Brahman. For them it is mandatory. But you are saying that what you do here is meaningless. How do scriptures help? How will the study of Gita, how the study of scriptures will help? How can Jap Dhyan help? For example, just now we said that Mukti cannot be a product of Jap Dhyan. Mukti cannot be a product even of samadhi. Then why study scriptures and practice rituals? Why do Jap dhyan? Because any act performed in dream state is useless in the waking state. This is a very important point. Any religious act that you do, whether you are performing a ritual or you are studying books, or you are performing Japam, or you are performing meditation, you have to be always conscious of the fact that Brahman alone exists. For the devotees, think of a Krishna Devotee, now he thinks that by studying Bhagavatam he will attain Krishna, he will attain Krishna Consciousness, which is a new term. But he cannot in any way. Because if by studying Bhagavatam you attain the state of Krishna, whatever that might mean, it will be contradiction in terms because then Lord Krishna himself becomes product of some cause. So how to do it? You have to treat Bhagavatam itself as holy Krishna. You have to treat the study of Bhagvatam as holy Krishna, You have to treat the devotees of Lord Krishna as Lord Krishna. There is the beautiful expression Vaishnava Tradition, which Sri iRamakrishna used to say - Bhagvata Bhakta Bhagaban they are one and the same. When you perform

Yajna, everything is Brahman. If you want to make use of all these things that we are studying in spiritual life then you have to be always conscious of the fact every act you perform, not only spiritual, even the ordinary ones they have to be directly related to your chosen ideal. If you want to go into realisation of absolute, realisation of non-dual consciousness, you have to keep in mind all the time it is all non-dual consciousness. I am one with that non-dual consciousness. Similarly if you are devotee of say Lord Shiva, you do the same thing. The books I study are Lord Shiva, the words that I read in those scriptures are the words of Lord Shiva himself. When I study I worship Lord Shiva. I am filled with Lord Shiva and Lord Shiva fills this universe. Unless this is the attitude, unless this is the outlook, study of scriptures, performance of rituals are absolutely of no consequence.

That is why you will see that in every religion, there are people who are into a thousand things, they perform so many rituals. When you perform some rituals, when you study books, they will always give you some psychic energy. No doubt about it. But the ultimate result of God realisation , the ultimate result of realisation of the non-dual state can never be attained. The mind has to be seen as illusory. Everything in the realm of mind is illusory. However, the way out of the solution is the mind. The way out is that one has to think that everything belongs to mind. In earlier times in villages, sometimes if there was a thorn prick, people had to take one thorn and take it out and throw both of them. You have to use your mind, you have to use scriptures to get out of it. But the idea has to be always that whatever I am performing, my very idea, my very mind is one with indivisible consciousness.

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स्वप्ने चावस्तुकः कायः पृथगन्यस्य दर्शनात् ।
यथा कायस्तथा सर्वं चित्तदृश्यमवस्तुकम् ॥Karika 36॥

The body active in dream is unreal as the other body, quite distinct from it, is perceived. Like the body, everything, cognised by the mind, is unreal.

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Says, the dream body is unsubstantial because the other body, the physical body is perceived as different from it. Like the dream body, all things cognised by the mind are not substantial. The dream is illusory. Not only the dream is illusory, everything that this mind perceives is an illusion, because the mind itself is an illusion. Any perception by mind is mithya. Now this will have a very thorough discussion why every perception by mind is Mithya or illusory. That will be taken up.

50. There is no cause and effect

We had been discussing how we think that the world around us is more real than our dream state. And more importantly, we think that the dream state is dependent on the waking state. It is this world that helps us to create whatever is there in the dream state.

Dear listeners, if you are interested in Philosophy, specially Vedanta Philosophy, and have a rational bent of mind, I would request you to listen to our talks from the beginning. And there can never be a better work than Mandukya Karika.

What exactly is Mandukya Karika that we are discussing? Mandukya Karika is discussing what is reality? What is real in this world? Am I real? Is this world real?

Usually when we think of Upanishads, we think that either something mystic, something very deep, something that cannot be comprehended and when you come to a simpler level, we think that it is something that talks about Atman, Brahman. It is all true, absolutely true. But actually upanishad talks about reality. What is real and who is real?

Verse 36 attacks the common notion that the waking state is real. This is a very interesting discussion. And ultimately we conclude that there is no cause , there is no effect.

Verse no 36 had beautifully said when we dream, when anybody dreams, he feels that he has a body. There is definitely a sense of identity and Identity always implies the sense of body. And with that body he goes anywhere in the world. And it is obvious that his body keeps lying sleeping in his bed. Gaudapada who wrote this Mandukya Karika, doesn't use a second person to prove it. He just says that, just think of yourself. You dreamt that you went to Delhi in your dream. Now it is not physically possible to go to Delhi and return, during the time that you slept. Similarly you see big houses, big cars, during the dream, the example he uses in Mandukya Karika is of elephants etc. Dreams are experienced within the body and perceived by the mind. It is not possible for those huge things to enter your body . Which means the ideas were getting conjured up in the mind.

All these make all of us think that the waking state is the real state, the world is real and the dream is a dream, imaginary. If you are interested in Neuroscience, you may see that they have yet to come up with a proper explanation. Now comes verse no 37

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ग्रह णाज्जागरितवत्तद्धेतुः स्वप्न इष्यते ।

तद्धेतुत्वात्तु तस्यैव सज्जागरितमिष्यते ॥ Karika 37॥

As the experience (of objects) in dream is similar to the experience (of objects) in the waking state, therefore it is thought that the waking experiences are the cause of the dream-experiences. On account of this reason, the waking experiences (supposed to be the cause of the dream) appear as real to the dreamer alone (but not to others).

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The experience of objects in a dream is similar to the experience of objects in a waking state. So waking experience is regarded as the cause of dream, because there is similarity.

It is for this reason, that the dream appears as real to the person who is dreaming. Essentially Mandukya raises the question: what is real? How do you define real?
There was the great western philosopher Bradley and he wrote a famous book “Appearance and reality” where he attempted to address this question, how do you define reality? Even our Bertrand Russel, the great philosopher , tried to discuss what is reality.
In these verses Mandukya Karika takes a very simple approach towards reality. And this approach is as simple as it is majestic. Mandukya simply says, that which is a common experience to all is real. Gaudapada, gives here such a simple explanation. But remember it must be common to all and not common to the majority. For example, since our childhood, we have felt many common things and we say the sun rises in the east. But anyone who has some knowledge of science knows that the sun does not rise. It is the earth that is rotating around its axis. Anyone who has some knowledge of science, anyone who has some understanding of astronomy will admit it is the earth that revolves around the Sun and rotates about its axis and this rotation causes the sunrise and sunset. Technically this is real. For the common people the Sun rises in the east and they are the majority. However, the fundamental idea remains the same. It does not matter whether the majority of people consider something to be real. To be real, it has to be accepted by all who have experienced that. Now here in this world, I stay at Belur Math, which is in Howrah district, and we have this famous Howrah station. Now you go to Howrah Station and you say it is Howrah station. Anyone else who goes to the Howrah station, all will say that it is Howrah station. Now naturally it is a common experience that it is Howrah station. So Howrah station is something which is real.
Gaudapada says, when you sleep you start wading into dreams, and from there you go deeper into dream. And during the dream, you see things and you feel that this is the common experience of every one. Yet when you wake up, you realise that dream is your absolutely personal experience. No doubt about it. Any sensible person will tell you that your dreams are your dreams. So a dream is a personal experience, strictly subjective experience and you say that dreams are product of waking state. So by the same logic when applied backward the conclusion is that your experience of the waking state is a personal subjective experience and you cannot say that the experience of the waking state, the experience of the world, is a common experience for all. Logic does not permit you to say that. This means that waking state too is a personal subjective experience, implying that it is not common to all and the ultimate conclusion is that it is not REAL. The world is not REAL. Because Gaudapada uses our own argument, our own logic and says that dreams are product of waking state, but dreams are subjective personal experience. Of course it's obvious. So waking state also has to be subjective personal experience. Which means, the waking state is not real. This is what verse no 37 says. So, the premise , the criteria that Gaudapada sets

for a thing to be real, for a state to be real is that it has to be common to all. Your dream is not common to all. So dreams are not real. Dreams being a product of the waking state, as we say, the waking state too cannot be common to all and hence the waking state is not real. The world is not real.

Verse no 36 had explained how the dream body is false and if it is subjective personal experience, in the waking state, these bodies are also false. Let me go a little deeper into it. The problem with us is that we think that seeing is believing. Indeed it is true that seeing is believing. The problem is that every seeing update thing, updates the previous seeing.

It so happened that once I had a chance to go to a place where I was during my school days and college days. Sometimes, when you get older, you like to revisit the old places where you stayed, studied or have some special memory, maybe like visiting your school when you are 50 or 60. Suddenly you realise that things have completely changed. The most important change that you will notice is the roads and the lanes look narrower, they look shorter, distance seems to have shortened. It is a universal phenomena. Just try, if you don't believe me, just go visit a place, where you were at least 30 years ago. Suddenly you feel that roads have become narrower. You will say that roads have narrowed. Common sense says that roads cannot become narrow. Similarly, you will feel as if the rooms have changed, they have become smaller. Rooms cannot get small. The thing is, when you live somewhere, as you keep growing, as your body keeps growing, and as the surrounding inputs, surrounding data keeps changing, your brain goes on updating that continuously. You don't feel the change. When a person visits the place after say 30 years , 40 years, even if the place has not changed, he has changed. He has become more mature, he has grown in his brain activities, he has more exposure. When he tries to look back at the old place, old associations, with the same old memory, they do not fit. How can that be real then ? The external world keeps changing because memory plays tricks and when you think of your childhood memory, some place where you were and you will realise that memory is playing tricks. The world is changing , even otherwise the world is continuously changing. Earth is moving, the solar system is moving, so many things are happening and there is solar energy, there is wind energy continuously hammering on those places, persons and people are ageing and a person who is always there does not feel the change because of the continuous update. But we feel the change. That shows that our experiences are subjective personal experience, but we do not even realise it.

When you get absorbed in something, when you are seeing something continuously you get absorbed in it. You completely forget that things are changing around you. I read one beautiful anecdote, one joke, one young lady was getting married and her mother gifted her own wedding dress, to put on during the wedding. And when the mom brought out a wedding dress, she started shedding tears. So, the daughter asked the mom, why are you

crying? Does it remind you of your marriage? She says there was a time when I could fit in this dress, now I cannot. So, you see, as the time passes, the body changes and suddenly something comes from the past and you realise that you don't fit there any more. If it's real, everyone should have the same kind of feeling and we know it very well that something, an object, is seen differently by different persons. Look at the Moon. We have one Bengali poet who describes a full Moon as a burnt bread. Poets see the Moon differently. Scientists see the Moon differently. It is all about interpretation. Even when it comes to experience, experiences are actually not common. We don't even realise it. And we never realize that they are subjective, strictly personal experiences.

What is more interesting about this is that people consider religion and God to be illusory because different religions talk differently about God. See how we use the same argument about God. People say that the knowledge given by science is common to all. When they say that it is scientific, they mean to say that it is accepted by all the learned. In the case of religion they say that Prophets differ. Different religions talk differently about God, implying that God, religion etc is illusory and the world is real because science says it. In reality it is just the reverse.

Religion is not a subjective personal experience, because till you are in Savikalpa Samadhi, till you are in the realm of mind, you will have vision of different God and that is why you find that different religions talk differently about God, because they are within the realm of mind. God, the absolute pure consciousness is appearing to them as personal God. The moment you go for the impersonal God, when you transcend the empire of mind, what remains is pure existence, pure knowledge and pure bliss. And all these sages, all the prophets said the same thing. If at all there is a unanimity in this world about something about truth, it is about God. God, the absolute, God the impersonal. We don't even realise that when we talk about science being real, science being correct, science explaining the world, actually the world is a subjective personal experience. Gaudapada has given beautiful arguments. When it comes to Good, God the absolute, the experiences are common. Atman is real. Why is Atman real? Because everyone experiences the same thing. Sri Ramakrishna has very beautifully said in his Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, in the state of Advaita “Sab Seyaler ek ra” which roughly means all the jackals call in the same tune. When the jackals shout at night it is a cacophony. When the jackals make the cry, they sing out different tunes, to give an idea that they are in huge numbers. So even if you have only two jackals they will sound as if there are five or seven jacals. And if there are 4 or 5 of them oh my god they appear to be the whole herd. Interestingly, if two jackals start singing in the or making noise in the same note, they stop. Usually when we are singing, if somebody is out of note, people stop. In the case of Jackals it is the reverse. If they have the same note, they stop. And Sri Ramakrishna says beautifully in the state of Advaita all the Jackals cry out the same voice. If the test of

being real is an experience common to all, then Atman alone is real, everything else is unreal, including God with form. Unreal in the sense that it belongs to the empire of mind. And the world is absolutely unreal because it is purely personal subjective experience. It is funny that we think this world to be real and God to be illusory because of the same reason, because we think that everyone has the same experience, particularly because of the intervention of science. But no it is not. It is about something like you know, those of you might have seen those grandfather clock, the old time clock, where there used to be pendulum, and those of you who know something about physics, know that when a pendulum swings its point of rest is just vertically below and when swinging it has maximum speed there. And when it goes to one end or the other there is the point of maximum instability. And it finds rest there. God is the point of rest. We have maximum instability there. The world is the place of activity and we feel as if we have rest. Exactly like that we think this world to be an experience which is common to all but actually it is subjective personal experience. We think God to be subjective personal experience but actually it is common to all. This is a paradox. Such contradictions I am sure many of you would find it pretty interesting. One of our listeners says reality is what is permanent forever. It is exactly so. And if it is permanent for forever then in that case the experience has to be common to all.

I hope you liked this argument by Gaudapada, I just gave you an explanation, what exactly he meant to say, in verse no 37. Not only dream, waking state too is personal and subjective. So, now verse 38 begins and the objection is raised that the dream state is seen to be extremely unstable, it is continuously changing. But waking state is much more stable. Waking seems to be much more permanent compared to the dream. So why is waking state not real? The reply is that yes you are absolutely correct but this permanence that you see, that is for the ignorant people, those who had God realisation they will all say that the world is impermanent. You may read any book of sayings of Buddha, Jesus or Sri Ramakrishna, all say the same that the world is not real. They will all say the world is impermanent. Kathopanishad has a beautiful manttra , nityo nityānāṁ cetanaś cetanānām (Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.2.13 - it is the eternal amidst non-eternal.. Because we don't have a complete understanding of the waking state and dream state that is why we think that it is like that. Because we are ignorant.

But if you can go into samadhi, if you can gain that knowledge, then you realise that no, it is the other way round. Waking state is as unstable as a dream state. What Vedanta tries to say is that dream is not dependent on the waking state. Actually it is an independent state and it is a stage of Atman. Attman keeps on experiencing. Atman experiences waking, experiences dream, it experiences dreamless state and Turiya which is all beyond it, where

there is nothing, no experience at all. So to think that dream is born of waking is completely wrong. And this is what verse 38 will talk about.

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उत्पादस्याप्रसिद्धत्वादजं सर्वमुदाहृतम् ।

न च भूतादभूतस्य सम्भवोऽस्ति कथञ्चन ॥ Karika 38॥

All these are known as unborn, as their creation or evolution cannot be established as a fact. It is ever impossible for the unreal to be born of the real.

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All the entities are said to be unborn since birth cannot be established as a fact. It is utterly impossible for the unreal to be born of the real. Says that, earlier when we were discussing it was established that cause and effect are actually illusory. It was discussed on the basis of philosophies. It will be discussed again. The whole thing is done in a comprehensive way. Now because there is no cause and effect, so the wise, that is those who have realised the truth, those who have seen Atman, those who have known God, they know that there is no birth. That is Ajatavada, the famous Ajatavada of Mandukya. That which is real, cannot give birth either to real, or to unreal. Pure Atman can never give birth either to the real waking state or to the unreal waking state. The idea is that there is no waking state. We think that waking state is real.

The entire discussion revolves around one single thing whether the world we see is real. Because if this world be real, then God becomes meaningless. And to say that God is also real and waking state is also real, it does not work. So, verse no 38, simply says, that you say that waking state is real and that dream state is unreal. That's what we normally think, that's what we say that as the objection was raised that waking state seems to be more permanent and the dream state seems to be impermanent. Dream seem to be illusory. Vedanta counters and says how can something permanent produce something impermanent? How can that which is real, produce something which is unreal. The unreal cannot be born out of real, just not possible. Anything that is born, will carry the characteristics of its parents, like we know today that the genetic pool coming from mother and father remain the same, just the combination and recombination and permutation etc,. Happen. The parental tendencies have to be there, genetically. On that comes the sanskar of the individuals coming from the past birth. So it is only for the ignorant that waking appears to be more real and dream appear to be less real. If you start analysing your own experiences of the world, you can see how things have been changing, how there is no permanence in this world. And you will see how different people are perceiving things differently. Even the acts of the person are seen differently by different people. A person commits an act of violence, some people will call him a terrorist , others will call him a holy warrior. Experiences are totally different. Naturally the question comes, where is the whole thing leading to? On the one hand Vedanta is saying that there is no birth, which means that

dream state is not born of the waking state. Again you are saying that neither there is waking, nor there is dream state. Actually all these things have been made very clear in the beginning itself by Vedanta in this Mandukya Karika, where it states that these are states, states of Atman. Comes verse no 39 which is very interesting/

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असज्जागरिते दृष्ट्वा स्वप्ने पश्यति तन्मयः ।

असत्स्वप्नेऽपि दृष्ट्वा च प्रतिबुद्धो न पश्यति ॥Karika 39॥

Being deeply impressed with the (reality of the) unreal objects which a man sees in the waking state, he sees those very things in dream as well. Moreover the unreal objects cognised in the dream are not seen again in the waking state.

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A man filled with the impressions of the unreal objects seen in the waking state, sees those very things in dream as well. But do not see in the waking state, the unreal objects seen in the dreams. You see certain things in dreams but you don't see those things in the waking state. Sometimes you will find that things have tallied, but usually it does not. There are many stories, and there are many movies where somebody has seen something in dream and then it is like deja vu , you suddenly realize that you are seeing it. However you usually see in dreams what you experience in the waking state. So, what does it all indicate? It is very interesting. The thing is when you get very deeply absorbed in something and because you are deeply absorbed you find those things getting replicated in the dream. That is why you will see that sometimes, if you take too much of salty food at night, in the dream you may continuously maybe see that you are near a fountain of water having water etc. Basically your particular sense was entangled with the salty thing. So because of that, since your mind was entangled with the salty things and slowly there is a demand for water and your mind is now completely immersed, it's completely absorbed in desire for water. Your body is demanding. It conjures up those thoughts in the dream. Similarly people who are extremely lustful, they see such dreams. And when you are lusting after something, you want wealth, you want this and that and you dream of only those things. Because your mind is so absorbed in certain ideas, on certain objects you see those objects. We find some scientists have made discoveries based on their dreams. But are those objects real? That's what we have been discussing, objects are not real. Then why are they real? Because of absorption. You are so absorbed, so obsessed with certain things that you think it to be real. I have come up with a very beautiful expression which I wish to use in future work, future work on mind, I love to analyse what is mind. It is my favourite subject. My conclusion was that awareness increases eminence. As you become more and more absorbed about the things you become more and more aware of that thing. And as you become more aware, its eminence increases in your mind. A very simple example is that you have to meet somebody very important. And that person who is waiting to meet you. And you are running late, and

so , you are always in a hurry, and thinking how quickly you can reach and thinking that time is moving so fast, your mind is focussed on movement, on motion, and not on time. And the person waiting for you, is continuously looking at the watch, as he has only the activity of waiting and nothing else. He continuously looks at his watch. For him 5 minutes seems to be half an hour. When as a student I used to write in examinations, the times seemed to run so fast. But later when I was doing invigilation duty in examination halls, I had no choice but to pace up and down the examination hall and wait for three hours to pass. The students are absorbed in writing, they don't feel the passage of time. But for the invigilator, passage of time is so slow and boring

Same thing happens when a boy tells a girl, I love you, I will die without you and get a refusal. And do people die when they are jilted? Yes they do. There are cases, but there are people who move on. But when it was the moment of separation there was pain, because there was absorption. Because of absorption there was eminence. This is what Karika says. Objects are illusory, your emotions are illusory, because you become absorbed in it, they grow in eminence. They grow to disproportionate size. They become like phantoms, huge. Yet they are unreal. That is what we have been discussing, that's what we have been showing. Karika goes further and says not every object that you experience in waking is seen in the dream and at times you will see that what you see in the dream from the waking sometimes changes proportions. Sometimes it changes its characteristics and not everything that you have seen in dream you experience in waking state, so there is no dependable causal relation. Question was raised that finally you say what is the relationship between waking and dream and it concludes: don't you ever think, don't you ever conclude that dream is dependent on the waking or waking is dependent on a dream. There is no dependable causal relation. There is no cause and effect relationship between dream. It will find that neuroscientists are trying to explain dreams on the basis of waking. Sigmund Freud who found libido and mortido in everything. Even in dreams and everything else.

It has an effect, but to say that dream is dependent entirely on waking it is wrong, absolutely wrong. The problem is that generally speaking, mind it, you see in the dream what you had experienced in the waking state and that is why generally we say that waking state produces the dream, but in reality it is not the truth. The conclusion is that you think that waking state gives birth to the dream state. Dream is an independent state as waking is and both of these are states of Atman. I don't know how important it feels to you, but it actually is very important, because if you go by science, if you go by neuroscience, then everything is judged by the the standards of the waking state. You want to judge God, religion and spirituality from the waking state , you want to judge dreams by the waking state, you want to judge the deep sleep by the waking state. So the waking state becomes the yardstick. It becomes your weighing scale. Mandukya Karika hits at that and shows that no. When you

think that waking state is reality, you mean to say that experience is common to all, which is wrong. It is not common to all. You think that dream state is a product of waking state - no it is not. The whole thing is shown logically. I was once reading a book by Will Durant, his very famous book, “Story of Philosophy”. He talks about Spinoza and his work “Ethics”. He said read Ethics, and then read a commentary on that work, and then again read “Ethics”. You will fall in love with Philosophy forever.

I would say study Mandukya Karika and you will fall in love with Vedanta forever. And conclusion is what is in verse no 40.

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नास्त्यसद्धेतुकमसत् सदसद्धेतुकं तथा ।

सच्च सद्धेतुकं नास्ति सद्धेतुकमसत्कुतः ॥ Karika 40॥

The unreal cannot have the unreal as its cause, nor can the real be produced from the unreal. The real cannot be the cause of the real. And it is much more impossible for the real to be the cause of unreal.

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So it is about real and unreal. It says, the unreal cannot have another unreality for its cause nor can the real have the unreal for its cause. Real is Sat, and unreal is Asat. The real cannot be the cause of the real, and how utterly impossible is for the real to be the cause of the unreal.

This verse no 40, it sums up the arguments that have been going on and it simply says birth is impossible, so, effect is impossible. Effect is a kind of birth. When we say birth we normally think of somebody being born. Here we are not talking about that. Effect is a kind of birth. Birth from a cause. Mandukya Karika sums up cause and effect and says there is no cause, no effect. If there is no effect there cannot be any cause.

Shunyavada of the Buddhists say that it is the unreal coming out of void. Everything is void and from there unreal is coming. It is not possible. Then comes Naya. It says, the world is real, God is real, real comes out from God. It is not possible. Why should real give birth to real. These things have been discussed and Mandukya actually uses the approach of waking and dream to show how the common ideas are completely wrong. Samkhya says that there is existing Prakriti, it gives birth to existing world, sansar. This was also contradicted earlier. And Dvaita, dualists, they consider that unreal is born from the real. The world is unreal. God is real. Mandukya Karika contradicts all and says neither real will produce real nor real will produce unreal. Nor unreal can produce real, or unreal can produce unreal. There are only two possibilities. Either cause is real or cause is unreal. And if it is either real or unreal, then make all these possible combinations, and nothing can be born from anything. It is not possible. This is what the discussion has been going on. Conclusion is that there is no birth, conclusion is there is no cause, there is no effect. So, what about Karma Vada that we Hindus talk about? You get the result of your past Karma, good or bad. Mandukya is saying these ideas are meant for mediocre minds. The real

Vedantic mind, the real super minds, they don't. Forget about believing, they know that there is no cause and effect because Brahman cannot get transformed into anything , It is not possible. Whatever transformation is, is Brahman only. We, because of our limited understanding, think that this has changed, that has changed etc., etc..

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विपर्यासाद्यथा जाग्रदचिन्त्यान्भूतवत्स्पृशेत् ।
तथा स्वप्ने विपर्यासात् धर्मांस्तत्रैव पश्यति ॥ Karika 41॥

As one in the waking state, through false knowledge, handles , as real, objects whose nature cannot be described, similarly in dream also, one perceives , through false knowledge, objects whose existence is possible in that condition alone.

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As a person in the waking state, through false knowledge appear to handle objects, whose nature is inscrutable, as if they were real . So also in dreams he perceives false knowledge, objects whose existence is possible in the dream state only.

Whatever you are handling in the waking state, you think that to be real, but actually they are unreal because the objects in this world are product of Maya. They are product of Maya because we all think that we are experiencing objects which are real yet unreal. Let us understand through an example.

Here is this pen. I know I am seeing this pen, I am touching this pen, it is obvious. No one can deny it. But we know real is permanent. We know that the pen was not there one day this pen will not be there. The pen is not permanent. If the pen is not permanent then it cannot be real. Yet I am experiencing it. That means the reality of the object is not as real as the reality of Brahman and its reality is not as unreal as a child of a barren woman. It is not as unreal as a mirage. It is real and yet unreal. Real because I am experiencing it and unreal because it is not permanent. And that is why it is Maya.

Maya is defined as something which appears to be there, and yet it is not there. Permanently. Anything which is (deshato, kalto, Vastuto abichhinaha), not compartmentalised by space, time and as objects, is real. Only Brahman, Atman cannot be limited in these three compartments. This pen is limited, it is limited in space, limited in time, limited as an object. And yet it is there that is why it is Maya. Now because of our absorption with the objects, which are actually unreal. We see them as real.

When we say unreal, actually these are objects of Maya. and we consider them to be real, and they belong only to the waking state, just like that. The objects of the waking state they too are unreal, they too are products of Maya. And their existence belongs only to the dream state. So the objects of the dream state are completely different from the objects of the waking state. We say that because we find certain similarities, so we think that waking

state is producing dream but when you go to dream you don't think like that. Similarly when you have samadhi you realize that it is not like that.
Conclusion is that the objects in dream are inscrutable, unknowable, they are neither real nor unreal. They are real only in the dream state. They are unreal as a "son of a barren woman". We are talking like that from the waking state but same thing if you go to the samadhi state, if you go to that super sensuous state of knowledge then you realise that it is all false. The bottom line is that there is no cause and effect, and there is no birth and the world, the waking state, is as unreal as the dream state.

51. Duality is for the weak

To do a bit of recapitulation, Mandukya Karika is all about showing that Atman alone exists. Call it Atman, call it Brahman, call it consciousness, this is the truth and that alone exists. And that truth in the Upanishads is known as Atman or Brahman, Atman when we see it from our standpoint and Brahman when we see it from a holistic standpoint. They are one and the same. And Atman alone exists. The ocean alone exists. Waves are there, waves are very much there but they don't have an independent existence. This is what has been shown in the Mandukya Karika. Multiplicity that we see in the waking state, that we see in the dream state, that has become part of our reality. Multiplicity, which we consider to be absolutely real, inviolable, in fact does not have an independent existence.
Advaita Vedanta does not say that objects do not exist. For example this pen very much exists. it is there, it is real and I am perceiving it. If you question this, then your perception itself comes under question.
What Mandukya karika says, what Advaita Vedanta says is that it does not have an independent existence of its own. Since it does not have an independent existence of its own, my body also does not have any independent existence of its own, and worse, mind does not have any independent existence of its own. Whatever is there is actually Atman. And what we perceive as multiplicity is an illusion. Illusion is not the right word because every time we think of illusion we generally think of a magician conjuring up something, something false. But it is not false. It is Maya. Maya means for all practical purposes it is real, but it does not have an independent existence.
Let us now talk about the Dualists. In fact every religion is dualist apart from the Advaita Vedanta Philosophy. For the Dualists, in extreme cases, God is true, the soul within us is true, and the world is true because God created it and God cannot create something false.

Particularly for most of these Vaishnavites these three things are true. And even if the world is considered as something inferior, they talk about spirit and God.

In the Christian world, there are lots of great Christian Philosophers who tried to show how in their language, in their expressions, in their words it is all one. It was Meister Eckhart, when you read his writings, you would feel as if you are studying Advaita Vedanta. However, the popular Christian traditions and beliefs won't permit those things. It is the same with Sufi traditions in Islam. They have this concept of I and my Master are one that is not permitted in Islam. Unless you allow freedom, unless you let people think and argue and present their views, the system cannot grow. Growth presupposes freedom. Education is all about freedom. Spirituality is also a kind of education. Unless there is freedom, there cannot be growth.

Mandukya Karika goes one step further. We know of the three states of Waking, dream and deep sleep. Normally we think that waking state is more real than dream. Mandukya Karika shows logically that the waking state is absolutely not different from the dream state, as far as the reality is concerned. Mandukya Karika has shown that the waking state is as false as the dream state because of the similarities. Waking state is not superior to the dream state as we commonly think. Not only that, dream is not even dependent on the waking state. Sushupti or deep sleep is of course easy to explain.

What the Upanishad says, what Vedanta says is that these three are actually states of Atman. It is Atman. It conjures up those things. And it is counterintuitive.

We were having a discussion with some of my brother monks. And I brought up this topic, and said see how Vedanta is counterintuitive. Just like quantum physics. Now one of my brother monks pointed out a wonderful thing. He said that not only Quantum Physics, the whole of science is counterintuitive, because of the most simple logic. The first thing that we learn in physics, Newton's laws of motion. Newton's first law of motion says everything continues to be in the state of straight motion or at rest, unless it is impelled by some external force. This is true but so counterintuitive. When a ball is rolling in Cricket and then it stops naturally anyone will say it is because of friction. We can say this because we have been taught these things in our schools. Otherwise extremely counterintuitive. A bird is perching gently silently on a tree where its colour matches with the green of the leaves. And suddenly it flies out and

you feel as if something has come out of nothing. And Newton says that it will continue its state of rest. It's counterintuitive. Don't want to believe it. Because you see that the things which are in motion they stop, and things that are at rest go into motion. Then we were trained to think since our childhood that according to Newton's laws. Similarly we say the Sun rises in the East. Physics says, no, it is the other way round. It is counterintuitive. And that is what made me think, see, truly speaking, the entire system of education is

counterintuitive. Entire system is counterintuitive. You are born in a system, you grow with that system, and because you are growing up with this system you become one with it, you get identified with it and you start taking that to be true. And suddenly comes some kind of education and it brings your glass house, reaches up to you, changes your feeling and your perception starts changing. And now you grow up under a particular system and with time you laugh at yourself with the ignorance that you were born under, in a society, in a family where there was a certain kind of ignorance. Now suddenly because of your exposure to some kind of education your perception changes, your outlook changes. And now you belong to that. That is why, Europeans, when they discovered science, when they started taking strides in science, they started laughing at us Indians. And well to a great extent they were correct, but not fully. Absolutely the same things happen in Vedanta. More so in religion.

Swami Vivekananda, particularly his book, Lectures from Colombo to Almora, you see how Swami Vivekananda repeatedly compares the western world's approach towards religion and India's approach to religion. He said that here in India you find that the highest philosophy, highest spiritual truth is even with an ordinary village farmer. Anyone who has been educated in the western system of education will say that anyone who has not learned the proper things, proper subjects, one who has not gone through the rigors of education, he is not to be trusted. But as far as philosophy is concerned, Swami Vivekanada says that even the most uneducated farmers of India have more understanding of religion than the great professors of Western universities. Indeed it is a fact. Because true religion is counterintuitive. It is a system of education. We Indians have been brought up under this system, so we know.

You know there are people of a particular religion, and you can guess who and they keep on attacking us and we have lots of comments coming, most I delete, they will say in Hindu philosophy, Hindu system. Of course they understand nothing. There is also a preacher, who has run away from India and he conjures up arguments. So one fellow has written something like that and I said look if you have so much understanding you would have born a Hindu. I didn't mean to insult him, it is a fact. Unless you are born in Hindu system of thought, you cannot understand Vedanta. To understand Vedanta you have to drink the milk of your mother who has been brought up under Hindu traditions. When Swamiji was going to preach Vedanta in America, how much did he succeed? Not much. Some people were influenced no doubt about it. What about Vedanta being preached in America these days, it does not make any impact. Buddhism makes more impact, because Buddhism is a highly simplistic religion. It is a very small branch. It is just like a drop of Hindu religion. It is a very simple thing. Just take our Yog philosophy , apply some cosmetic changes here and there, it becomes Buddhism. And Yog is not even treated as a true philosophy in the Indian system. I

don't mean to criticise . I am just stating a fact. Unless you have grown up in this system, it will be very difficult for you to appreciate this. Because Vedanta, like science, is counterintuitive. Other religions are not. Because in the case of other religions most things that you hear are something you see everyday. Duality, even a cow knows that cow is different from the grass and that is why the cow moves towards the grass to eat it. The cow knows its calf is separate from it. So when a calf is born it licks the calf. What is so big in this knowledge that I am separate from the world? What is so great about it telling that I and my God are different and my God is my master? Nothing.

When you say that I and my father in heaven are one, it becomes counterintuitive. Do we mean to say that truth has to be counterintuitive? No. Truth does not have to be counterintuitive. For example we all know that a river flows downstream. Water always flows downwards. It finds its level. This truth is not even counterintuitive because everybody knows. However, some truths are counterintuitive and simply because it is counterintuitive it does not mean it is not true. This is what Mandukya Karika has been telling us and from this point.

This verse no 41 said, when we have some kind of miscomprehension during the waking state, for example when you are walking in semidarkness, you see a rope and you take it for a snake or you see a snake and you take it for a rope. This miscomprehension will always be there. Now, the way we have miscomprehension in the waking state, just like that we have miscomprehension in the dream state. And the way we think that dream state is unreal, just like that waking state also is actually unreal and we discussed it in detail earlier, we are not repeating it.

We go to the next verse, verse number 42. From verse 42 onwards, in the Mandukya Karika, our revered Gaudapada indirectly answers to the allegation that Mandukya Karika says there is no birth, no death, no creation, no multiplicity. But all our scriptures , Gita, Bhagavatam, Ramayana, whichever you consider, all follow from the Vedas and the Upanishads, which provides the ultimate truth. and those very books are talking about creation, those very books are talking about multiplicity even those books are talking about Varmashrama, dharma. For example Purusha Suktam says that the forerunners, Brahman, Ksatriya, Vaishya, Shudra, are born from God. Those of you who are interested may listen to our Talk in Bengali and in English on Purusha Suktam. Then why have these things? Very often when we want to explain some scripture, we tend to become selective.

Now if you say that there is no birth, no creation, there is no multiplicity, so, why do these scriptures talk about this? Now this is being answered.

(When we use the word Veda, it means the Veda the book, we say the four Vedas or simply Vedas, we mean the four Vedas. Actually they are the same, the right word is Veda. not the Vedas. But we use it interchangeably)

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उपलम्भात्समाचारात् अस्तिवस्तुत्ववादिनाम्।

जातिस्तु देशिता बुद्धौः अजातेस्त्रसतां सदा ॥ Karika 42॥

Wise men support causality only for the sake of those who, being afraid of absolute non-manifestation (of things) , stick to the (apparent) reality of (external) objects on account of their perception (of such objects) and their faith in religious observances.

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Trus (त्रास) in Sanskrit means fear. We are so identified with our individuality, we are so identified with ourselves, so identified with everything we do, we are scared of lots of things. We are scared of death. Generally people are scared of death.

But why are we scared of death? Because our individuality is identified with the body, so we don't want to die. A person's identification with his or her children, they do not want their children to die before them. An honest person, a person who is established in Dharma, who is practising Dharma, does not want to give up Dharma. He feels that it is better to die if he is about to lose his Dharma. When the Muslims invaded India, one simple way to convert Hindus to Islam was to cut off the tuft of hair Shikha) they have on the back of their head, or to force beef into their mouth. And Hindus have been so orthodox that if somebody cut off someone's tuft that person would become outcast. I will tell you a very interesting story, which you will find very funny. When I was a kid, maybe 6, 7 or 8 years old, somehow I got a piece of blade which was quite unusual in the village where I grew up. And there was an elderly gentleman who moved around everywhere, a brahmin, who had a small tuft of hair, and once when he was taking an afternoon nap, I silently crept up to him and nearly cut off his shikha. I was happy that the blade was working. So when that elderly gentleman got up and somebody pointed out what happened to his shikha, there was a big hue and cry. Finally I was caught and was given a thorough beating and then this gentleman said, do you realise that cutting one's tuft is equivalent to cutting off his head. Well, it has nothing to do with a Brahmin. Actually every Hindu should keep tuft and I keep advising. Whenever I find somebody who is educated and learned and cultured, keeping Shikha, I feel proud. It is good. Shikha and Sutra, Sutra is Yojnopobit, the sacred thread, these two things define a Hindu irrespective of what Varna, or Caste he is. In earlier times, Sudras were not permitted. Now there is no sudra in India. I am talking about three thousand years ago and the laws that were valid then, they are no more valid. It is unnecessary. Because in the Indian system, in Hindu system, social laws keep changing. They don't have any permanent value. This idea that if somebody takes beef, he loses his religion, why? Because the person has identified himself with that individuality. My individuality lies with that. At least in the earlier times, most Hindus, particularly of North India, identified themselves with not eating beef. A Hindu woman till the other day, if you watch the movies of 70s and 80s, maybe even 90s,

you will understand, they were orthodox, widows never touched non-vegetarian food. After that I don't know, because by then I have become a monk. The idea that for a Hindu woman chastity was everything, and if somehow she lost her chastity because of the misdeeds of somebody, she felt that she has lost her individuality and whether she lives or dies, it is the same. Rather death is better than this ignominy. They would commit suicide. They would go crazy. This is what happens when some ladies are violated, molested. They carry this scar all through their life. Why? Because their individuality lies there. So learn this very simple thing. Never try to hurt the individuality of someone. However, when it comes to our Advaita Vedanta, Mandukya Karika says, because we are so used to our individuality, we are scared to give it up. **त्रसतां -** we are scared. I have no life outside my individuality. And so the apparent becomes real. Unlike Abrahamic religions, unlike the Vaishnavites, the Shaivaites, when I hear that Vaishanavites and Shaivaites keep fighting in the south I laugh because, in the Northern part of India, we don't have these problems. These appear so stupid and silly. For them, there is one readymade coat and that coat has to fit everybody. Not in Hinduism. According to Hinduism, you always make a coat to suit that person. In management also the person must fit the post. But in Japanese style of management the job is tailor made according to that person, the individual. Of course that is a far better kind of management. Because you take into consideration the individuality of that person. Hinduism, or Sanatan Dharma is an inclusive religion. The thing is Hindu religion. It is not “ism” the way other religions follow. Hindu religion is highly inclusive and highly accommodative. It has something for everybody, So people who are extremely identified by their individuality, who feel that they will be better dead if they give up something, Hinduism has a place for them also. The kids who are so identified with their playthings that they have. Try to take away those playthings and they feel so sad. They feel heartbroken. They cry. Our individuality is something like that. So, should we apply sledgehammers to those individuals? No no never. Gita says beautifully न बुद्धिभेदं जनयेदज्ञानां कर्मसङ्गिनाम् | जोषयेत्सर्वकर्माणि विद्वान्युक्तः समाचरन् ||3.26||.. People who have a different kind of understanding, different kind of belief, different kind identification with their individuality do not break their belief. Be with them, act like them, and from there try to bring them up. That is the quality of a great teacher. A great teacher will never break your beliefs. He will act like a doting mother, a very good mother, who does not go on contradicting the kid. She plays along and slowly from there she lifts her baby up. This is what religion has to do.

Personally speaking, I don't mean any criticism. I don't believe in any organised religion, for this reason. Because it is so ironcast, so calcified, if I don't fit into it, I am thrown out. I will be an outcast. My head has to be separated from my body. How sad! Verse 42 say

उपलम्भात्समाचारात् - says, wise men (sages) teach causality for those who are afraid of non-creation and assert the reality of external objects because they perceive such objects simply because there is perception. The idea is that there are people who believe that I perceive it so it is true and because they cling to various social and religious duties. There are people who see certain things, there is this external world and you make use of those things. Here is this pen, I use it for writing. I can see that pen and use it. I am used to it and because I am used to it, I don't want to say that it does not actually exist. The fact is that we are scared to let go. Letting go is not that easy. Letting go of your belief system. Letting go of your individuality is not an easy thing. So he says that people who are spiritually mediocre and dull are attached to their individuality.

A bright scientist may be spiritually dull or mediocre. For example Einstein himself as far as spirituality is concerned, was extremely mediocre. He was not letting go of his religious belief and that's why he came up with ideas like cosmological constant because he needed to fit science with his belief system.

So anyone who is identified with his individuality is essentially a medicare and dull person. And duality is meant for such people. Duality is meant for the weak. For them the apparent is real. That which appears before eyes is real. And that is why, our scriptures teach caste and class and their duties - Varnashram Dharma.

Now what Mandukya says is that if a person is dedicated to scriptural studies, as they continue with their studies, slowly they realise that what I am holding on to is actually false. If you read Swami Vivekananda's works, particularly books like JnanaYog, he repeatedly says that we are holding on to our individuality. And interesting thing is that individuality itself is something apparent. It is not real. Yet we hold on to that and we are scared to let that go. Letting go is not an easy thing and if you read any of these books on self improvement, power of positive thinking and self growth etc, they always talk about letting go. But it is not easy to let go. It is easy to talk about closure, there is some emotional wound that you have, some incidents you had, and you say let that there be closure. Time has come for closure. Can there be a closure? It is very difficult. When you say that let there be closure, basically we mean to say that the poison that is attached with that event, let that go. This scar will always remain, This scar will always show that there was something deep. This is like a coconut tree. When you take out a big leaf branch, a permanent scar remains. The scar does not go away. Letting go is so difficult. And then letting go of your individuality is unthinkable. Impossible, but what Mandukya says is that if you continue with the study, if you continue with the rigors, slowly you will realise. That is why sacred books like Gita say, perform your duties; one duty is as good as any other duty, or as bad as any other duty, because at the highest level, for a Jnani, a person who has realised the truth, for him, there

is no duty and there is nothing, Neither there is any kind of injunction nor there is any kind of prohibition. Scriptures say that do this and scriptures say don't do this. When they say do this, it is an injunction. When they say don't do this, it is prohibition. These things do not apply to a Jnani. In fact theoretically speaking, these things do not apply even to monks. Monks are not bound by the caste duties and class duties and by the injunctions and prohibitions of these scripture.

For example Christian monks take vow of chastity, poverty, obedience. It is a must. If you think of Buddhist monasteries they talk about Dharmang Sharanam Gachchhami, Buddhang saranang gachchhami, Sangham saranam gachchhami - they vow in the name of Buddha, Dharma and Sangha. In the Hindu tradition of the monks, there is no vow. In the Ramakrishna Mission there is no vow. You say I give this up, I give this up, I give up my lustful thoughts, I give up my identification with hair and beard. I give up my identification with my skin, I give up my identification with my bones etc. Thus Hindu monastic system , Hindu spiritual system is about giving up so that ultimately you can give up your individuality. But in other systems, including Buddhism there is no giving up. You take up some vow, so that you can give up certain other things. It is a very interesting thing. Spirituality is such a fascinating thing.

Hinduism has scope for every one. For those who are identified with spirits and ghosts, those who worship trees, those who worship stones, we have a place for them too. And those who say that I am Atman, Hinduism has a place for such persons too.

To understand this a very good example is that of scaffolding. When you are constructing a building or when you want to paint a building, you erect a scaffolding. And with the help of that, you climb up and do whatever you want to do and when the work is done, the scaffolds are removed, as it is no longer needed. The goal is to realise that you are Atman. And you create the kind of scaffolding you want. Whether that be of duality , whether that be of Varashram Dharma, whatever it is. So when people criticise practices of Hindu religion, they don't understand that if you look at those practices, from the standpoint of spirituality, they are all meaningless. Nothing matters. Rituals do not after, mythologies do not matter, the act of worship does not matter, these are secondary details. You can change them any time you want. Any saint can change that. But not so in other religions. In other religions the very idea of changing something is sacrilege. Mandukya turns it around a bit, and says those who are scared of that huge truth for them these things have been prescribed by the scriptures.

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अजातेस्त्रसतां तेषामुपलम्भाद्वियन्ति ये ।

जातिदोषा न सेत्स्यन्ति दोषोऽप्यल्पो भविष्यति ॥ Karika 43॥

Those who, being afraid of the truth of absolute non-manifestation, and also on account of their perception (of phenomenal objects), do not admit Ajati (absolute non-creation), are not much affected by the evil consequent on the belief in causality. The evil effect, if any, is rather insignificant.
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It says if a person is practicing duality it is all right. At least they are being religious. At least they are striving to reach some height. Often we say that such and such person is a corrupt person. Such a person is a lecherous person, yet he goes to the temple, or he is a monk or this and that. Hindu religion says, does not matter. If he is going to the temple, today or tomorrow he will change. If a person is practicing a dualistic system of belief, nothing wrong with it. God will see to it that someday he will realise his mistake and come on the right path. Unlike other religions which condemn them and swear that they will be going to hell. Advaita Vedanta doesn't treat them that way, and says at least they are in the path of spirituality unlike those who are not. It is better to be a committed dualist than to be nihilist, than to be an atheist. However , Swami Vivekananda says, it is better to be atheist than have no faith and be a believer in God, who does not have the real belief. But Swamiji meant that you need to have some belief, some strong conviction. Now dualists have a strong faith.I have seen some of these devotees of different sects, they are so committed, their life is so dedicated, so devoted to God. Once I went to Thiruvananthapuram then it was known as Trivandram and there is the temple of Ananthasayanam, Lord Vishnu also called the Padmanava temple. I heard that the priests who pray there are practically locked inside that temple for 12 years. And there was a priest whose daughter was to get married as a special permission, the daughter was married just outside that so he could see from inside the grill. For 12 years he was locked because such is the purity that has to be maintained. He cannot eat anything from outside, not even from his home. He cannot meet his wife, he cannot meet his children, what sanctity! Some may think it is madness. But it is not so. It is this kind of commitment that makes a religion great. For a non-believer it may be madness, they may think it is all so hard, but for them its perfectly alright.

So it says that things Jatidosha, some of the sin that accrues because of wrong belief, are extremely minor, compared to the great goal that they are pursuing. So,it is perfectly alright. Advaita Vedanta is the true religion of Hindu religion. True religion, true philosophy, and that is why Advaita can accommodate all these systems of thought. For us, Lord Shiva is as true as Lord Vishnu. Lord Shiva is as true as Lord Rama, Lord Krishna. They are all God for us. Because Advaita has a place for all, Advaita can accommodate everyone, every system of thought, every person. Those who are non-believers, for them also they have no problem. They would say, If you continue with your conviction, as far as spirituality is concerned, a time will come when you will learn the truth, you will realise the truth. And whether that truth will come from God or it will come from within is immaterial. But it will come. It has to come. So this verse no 43 says that sincerity is important. Unlike say, other religions, who say that

you will go to hell, to make things easy for you, I will cut off your head. No Advaita will ever talk like this. Even the dualists in Hindu religion are fanatic like that, but fanaticism is no religion. It is a mental illness. Every fanatic is mentally ill. Particularly when this fanaticism is affecting others.

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उपलम्भात्समाचारान्मायाहस्ती यथोच्यते ।

उपलम्भात्समाचारादस्ति वस्तु तथोच्यते ॥ Karika 44॥

As an elephant conjured up by the magician, on account of its being perceived and also on account of its answering to the behaviours (of a real animal), is said to exist, so also are objects said to exist, on account of their being perceived and also on account of their answering to our dealings with them. (in truth, the objects of sense perception are as unreal as the magician's elephant.

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When we grasp something, when we make use of it as was in verse no 42, our mind gets conditioned to think that it is true, it is correct, it is real. It is like a magician conjures up an elephant and then goes on doing certain things with that elephant, and one feels it is a real elephant. Well, the magical tricks of India used to be extremely famous and as per this description there were magicians who could conjure up magical elephants and would make that elephant dance and make that elephant do various things. Thus you find that there is some kind of object and that object is being used for a certain thing but you also know that it is all magic. Just like that in the waking state also there are objects and you make use of it, that does not mean that it is real So, Gaudapada, takes the reverse path and shows it simply because you see, you perceive an object, and you make use of it, that does not prove its reality. Simply because some persons think of God to be real, God means personal God, say Krishna to be real. There is a movement nowadays - Krishna, Krishna Krishna, they don't even pronounce the name correctly. They can say Krishnaaa which means Draupadi, instead of worshipping Lord Krishna, they are worshipping Draupadi. They go on criticising every other system. Why ? They believe only Krishna to be true. Krishna the personal God. But Gita does not talk about Krishna the personal God. Gita talks about Krishna who is impersonal. What the Upanishads talk about Atman, and Brahman , Krishna is that. Sri Ramachandra is also that. It is Krishna as Brahman and Shiva as Brahman, Rama as Brahman, Sri Ramakrishna as Brahman they are all true. But if separate, it is no God. Simply because you think that God is true, God is real and making use of that God for my spiritual growth, that does not mean that this is the ultimate reality, this is what this verse says. A very simple argument that **उपलम्भात्समाचारa -** Simply because you can perceive and make use of it., that does not mean that it is real.

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जात्याभासं चलाभासं वस्त्वाभासं तथैव च ।

अजाचलमवस्तुत्वं विज्ञानं शान्तमद्वयम् ॥Karika 45॥

Consciousness which appears to be born or to move or to take the form of matter, is really ever unborn, immovable and free from the character of materiality; it is all peace and non-dual.

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See in philosophy like this, someone can be so poetic! Anything that appears to be born, like here is this pen has been manufactured. Anything that has been born, anything that moves, anything that takes up the form of matter, is all pure consciousness. That is what perception is. Abhas (आभास) - means some kind of grasping, some kind of perception of work. **जात्याभासं -** being born, **चलाभासं -** that which moves, and **वस्त्वाभासं** - that appears as something real as an object, Gaudapada gives us a conclusion that anything that is born, anything that moves, anything that has a body, that which appears as matter, for example my body appears as matter, are all pure consciousness. These things do not have an independent existence. They are not real as an object. But they are real as pure consciousness, as pure Satchidananda, as pure Brahman. So, the example used by Acharya Shankar is Devdatta. Devdatta is a very favourite name of Acharya Shankar, which he uses whenever a name is needed. In philosophy also , Devdatta is a very popular name . He says that there is Devdatta, who is fair and who is tall, he is born, he moves, and there is an appearance. Does that make Devdatta to be real? No Devdatta is not real. It is Atman, it is Brahman that is real. When you love someone, know that you are loving Atman, when you hate somebody, know that you are hating Atman. But can you hate yourself? No you cannot. Hate yourself? Everybody loves oneself. I love myself. You love yourself. Sometimes figuratively we say that oh I hate myself for having done this. But no you don't hate yourself. Because you love yourself and you did something wrong and you feel Oh! I shouldn't have done it. Essentially you mean to say, the kind of personality I am and the love that I have for myself, I shouldn't have done this. Everyone loves themselves. Everyone. Whether male, female,children, whatever. Ultimately you love yourself. There being nothing other than Atman, how can you hate somebody? No it is not possible to hate somebody.You cannot. And that is why, you have learned not to hate anyone, not to hate anything, not to hate any idea, not to dislike any idea. This makes Advaita extremely accommodative. Every person is welcome, every idea is welcome, every object is welcome, most welcome. There is no hatred. There is no hatred. There is no exclusion. Exclusion is something alien to Advaita, exclusion is something alien to Hindu religion. But it accepts that everybody is not ready for the highest step. So there has to be scaffolding. How do you take that scaffolding? Through Varnashram Dharma, from their main duties, this and that.

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एवं न जायते चित्तमेवं धर्मा अजाः स्मृताः ।

एवमेव विजानन्तो न पतन्ति विपर्यते ॥ Karika 46॥

Thus the mind is never subject to birth or change. All beings are thus free from birth, Those who know (the Truth) are never subject to false knowledge.
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In the same way, the mind is also not born. Mind is never subject to birth, the mind is never born. All beings are free from birth, nothing is born. Those who know this, do not fall into false knowledge. If you know that no one has been born, if you know that mind has never been born, then you don't land up in false knowledge.Can you realise that Atman alone exists. But such persons are very few. The rest are weak, for them duality. Duality is preached in the scriptures, if you go through the Upanishads, if you go through the Vedas, you find that they are talking about the universe being created by God and yet nothing is created. Duality is for the weak. We shall now take up verse 47 from which starts Alata Shanti.

52. Alat Shanti - Stopping of a firebrand

We need to understand what is meant by the term Alat. It is a special term and not really translatable to English properly. We may at best describe it as a stick with a flame at one end : a Fire-Brand. If we move this Fire-brand fast, in darkness, fast and in a path, maybe a straight line, or crooked zigzag line or in a circular path, this will appear as a straight line or zigzag line or circle of fire. We did it when we were kids. Why we see a continuous line is because our eyes cannot detect still pictures moving fast enough as still pictures but as a moving thing. This principle is used in movies, videos, where the still pictures on the film negative move at particular speed (24 frames per second) and we see moving pictures in the films or the video.

During the time of Gaudapada, they did not have this concept of still pictures and moving pictures. So, he used the example of Alat, the Fire-brand, Firestick. When we see the fast moving fire-brand as a zigzag path of fire or a straight line or say a circle, what is actually there? Nothing but a small ball of fire. The movement creates the impression of a straight line or a zigzag line or a circle. If the fire-brand or the Alat is stopped, the circle or straight line or zigzag line vanishes.

No one can doubt that there was a circle. Where did that circle come from? And once you stop it, where did the circle go? Definitely some external agency did not produce the circle. We can say that It was produced from the Alat, the fire-brand. But it did not merge with anything, it came from nowhere. It was just an appearance. For those who do not know the reality, it is real. I remember as a kid, when I had first seen a movie, I strongly believed that

it was all real. And when my friends told me that it is all about pictures moving. i said yes in other cinema halls it might be so, but, in a cinema hall where I was, it was all real. Imagine my conviction, I was maybe 5 or 6 years old then. And it was impossible for me to believe it was just still pictures, moving before a projector at a particular speed. And finally when the realisation set in, it was heartbreaking for me. That is how you learn things in life, by breaking your heart.You are holding on to certain convictions, you believe certain things and then you realise that it is not like that. Your heart breaks and you learn lessons. This is what Gaudapada says here

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ऋजुवक्रादिकाभासमलातस्पन्दितं यथा ।

ग्रहणग्राहकाभासं विज्ञानस्पन्दितं तथा ॥ Karika 47॥

As a fire-brand, when set in motion, appears as straight, crooked etc, so also Consciousness, when set in motion, appears as the perceiver, the perceived and the like.

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Arguments are nearly over, once in a while they will say something, in general they are explaining the truth regarding Atman and its relation to the world. In the case of the firebrand we find that there are different kinds of figures depending on what kind of figure you make. If you can move it fast enough the figure will appear. And actually there was nothing but the firebrand, the firestick. The same is true of Consciousness. What is this world? How to define this world?

Acharya Shankar has beautifully put it in his introduction to Brahmasutra yusmat asmat pratyae gocharetwang - युष्मदस्मत्प्रत्ययगोचरत्वं - The idea of you and me, the knower and the known, subject object, the duality of subject and object is created by the mind. So here we have this pen. I know I am different from this pen. I am the subject, the knower, and this pen is the object - the known. It says, **ग्रहणग्राहक** - one who is grasping it, the knower,

Grahan means to catch, to hold. All these differences are because pure consciousness appears that way. Thus we find that, actually, in the previous verse, that is verse no 46, it was explained how if you have ParamarthaJnana, if you have the ultimate knowledge of Atman, if you realise that there is no cause and effect and there is no subject, object duality, then you completely go beyond the bondage of the emotions. Very often we say Ajnana is bondage. Very often we say that Maya is bondage. But, in our day to day life, the real bondage is the emotions.

When a person is hurt physically, say somebody is stabbed,, the pain that is born of the wound, floods the mind so powerfully that the mind of that person gets clouded. The brain gets clouded. One cannot judge properly. A mom may love her baby like anything but for some reason if that mom is in the greatest possible pain, she will not be able to take care of her baby or even think of the baby. In fact this is a proven thing that in the moments of

greatest of emotions, the first thing you think is of yourself. The thought of others come as the second preference. Now, who comes second is your love. Number one is always reserved for you yourself. It is always the first.

We normally say that there is no love like Mom's love . Even for the Mom, the number one is she herself. It is the number two that counts. That is why extreme stress or pain clouds our mind completely.

To a great or a lesser extent we are all driven by emotions. Lucky is the man who is not driven by emotions. Swamiji at one place says that whenever there is a conflict between head and heart, follow your heart. We all always follow our heart. Lucky is the man who follows his head. What Swamiji meant to say is that always be compassionate. We are all driven by our heart. Why is a person corrupt? He is driven by his emotions. He wants money for his family, for his children, for his parents and lots of things.You ask a criminal, hardened criminal, why he took the path of crime. There will be some kind of emotion involved. And then of course that becomes a part of his habit. So it is me driven by my emotions. Lucky is the man who can go by his head. Well, practically never in my life I have succeeded going by my head. How I wish I could. Whatever I do, most of the time I am clouded by my emotions. I know. Fortunately I can perceive my emotions. Earlier I was not so good but now I can. Advaita gives you knowledge and when you go for Advaita, when you become contemplative, when you become established in the system of knowledge, then you can distinguish between the right and the wrong, the true and the false. Your mind then becomes razor sharp. Once it becomes razor sharp, it cuts the external away. And then there is no emotion. If somebody asks, what Advaita does to you, you can say that it burns down your emotions, completely. Compassion will be there, but that is no emotion. Compassion is no emotion. You are travelling by car or just walking down the road, there is somebody, some impoverished person, some poor person. He or she asks for some money. You give some money.There is no emotion involved. It is compassion. Compassion does not bind you. Passion binds you. Those of you who have read my book, Param, there is this sentence, "Passion binds you. Compassion liberates you". The unfortunate thing is that very often we become compassionate to someone and then calm goes away and passion remains and we get bound. But once you are established in Advaita, all your delusions melt away, they just fade away. Once delusions go away, how can you have sorrow? I think that you are different from me. I know for sure that you are different from me. And that is the reason, why I have love towards you, why I have anger towards you. And that is why I have jealousy towards you. If these emotions are gone completely we will not have these feelings. But the emotions cannot go away. Very often people suggest how to do that. But that is the best way to fool others. Emotions are extremely good things and that is why in Bhakti literature they try to make use of emotions. Because they know that you cannot overcome it.

However if you get that knowledge, Supreme knowledge, and you realise that Atman alone exists, then of course there cannot be any emotion as then there are no two. When you know that there are no two, how can there be emotion?

What is being elaborated, even if you can apply a very basic understanding of this world, you can think that those you love passionately and intensely are all consciousness in motion. Consciousness which is active. When consciousness is active, it appears like the knower and the known. As a line made by a moving fire, firebrand appears to be straight , crooked etc. So, consciousness when set in motion appears as the perceiver and the perceived and the like. So this duality of the knower and the known, perceiver and the perceived, all these things are because consciousness is in motion. Naturally you will ask consciousness being infinite, how can it be in motion? Consciousness is not in motion in that way. It is just an idea that it is in motion. Those of you who might have taken a long train journey, particularly in India, where the Indian trains are still jerky, or those of you who have taken a long boat ride, particularly through choppy waters, once you are out of it even then you feel as if your body is in motion. And now if you have been in a boat, where there have been waves, and after a very long journey maybe of 2-3 days, when you put your foot on solid ground, you find that your legs have become rubbery, your whole system goes into it, whole system now seems to be moving, whole system now vibrates in that motion. You become one with it. This is the problem with the world, that pure consciousness, which has the power to think, thinks and because of its thinking it creates the waking state, creates the dream state, creates the deep sleep state. The way we dream and conjure up things and things happen and events happen, just like that Atman it is creating for itself those states. Now when those states are being created we call it consciousness in motion. To make the ideas clear. Sri Ramakrishna gave a very beautiful example. Snake and its motion. Usually when a snake moves, it does not move in a straight line, moves in a zigzag way. Now whether the snake is sitting quietly or the snake is moving, it is the same snake. Whether the consciousness is in motion or consciousness is in quiet, it is the same consciousness. Consciousness in motion, whatever you understand by this, this is the world. You may imagine a huge iceberg and that iceberg kind of breaks. Now you have smaller chunks of ice floating in the sea.. Anybody watching, maybe think of those pieces of ice having some kind of mind, some kind of power to think, how will it see? Oh that is a larger one going, that is a smaller one going. It has no value etc. Ultimately it is all water. And naturally those of you who have understanding will contest it on this or that ground but remember the sphere of consciousness, the idea of consciousness has no match in this world. So whenever these examples are taken , they are just to give you an idea. Nothing is being proved with these examples. Something has been proven. To give us some idea of what exactly it is, examples are being taken. Then says that whatever you see, the duality of subject and object, actually it is only consciousness, and

that consciousness has become the object. Just like the Alat, the firebrand. Because earlier it was shown how it is Aja i.e. unborn. And how it is motionless. Does not have any motion. It is never born.

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अस्पन्दमानमलातमनाभासमजं यथा ।

अस्पन्दमानं विज्ञानमनाभासमजं तथा ॥ Karika 48॥

As the fire-brand, when not in motion, is free from all appearances and remains changeless, similarly, Consciousness, when not in motion (imaginary action), is free from all appearances and remains changeless.

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As the firebrand, when not in motion, is free from all appearances and changes. So the appearance of a circle, or a starlight or an appearance of a crooked line, these are literally appearances. There is no birth involved, there is no death involved. Nothing. It is just an appearance. And the firebrand remains changeless. So consciousness is not in motion. It is free from all appearances and remains changeless. Well if I had not read Sri Ramakrishna, I would have thought that on the one hand you say that consciousness is infinite and since it is infinite, where can it move? How are you talking about motion and not in motion etc.. Now Sri Ramakrishna says this many times. And that is why the concept of Brahman and Shakti comes. And Acharya Shankar very clearly says that Shakti and Shaktiman, power and one who wields the power, are one and the same. So, Brahman and Shakti are one and the same. This Shakti is Maya. Why Maya? Because it appears to be in motion. Now me and you cannot question the presence of this pen. No one can question this.

Once I was invited to speak at one of our centers in Jamshedpur. There was a young boy, barely 8 or 9. He was showing some magic. And in one of his tricks, he took somebody's ten rupee note and put it in a coconut shell and burnt that shell. Then he broke that coconut and ten rupee note came out of it. I was the chief guest and immediately after the program I called for that boy and asked how did you perform this trick because one of my friends had been tricked by one of the Babajis into some Tantrik acts and that Tantrik had broken a coconut and something written had come out. This indicated a tantrik kriya but I knew it was all a trick. And that kid majestically told me it is all magic. I said I will give you a slap. I took him to his father. He did not want to tell the secret and then he said that he pierces the eye of the coconut, pushes in the ten rupee note and seals it with Fevicol or some kind of glue. Now burning of the note that of course is real. Anyone could make up. Now when you break it, the note that had been kept there, it comes out. Numbers will not be the same of course. Fair enough. I understood what had happened with my friend. As luck would have it, after 2-3 years again I was invited as the chief guest. Basically it was a school program. In such school programs they don't have to invite some real VIPs. Me being an ordinary monk, it was ok with them. Now this boy was again showing the magical tricks. Before he could come up

with coconut, I knew what was happening. It happened decades ago. It left a very deep impression in my mind. This is Maya. You see a trick for the first time and get charmed by it. You get involved in it. And once you know what exactly is happening behind the scene. Next time the same trick comes, you know what is happening and you are no more charmed by it. And that is why, Prakriti keeps on conjuring up new tricks. Rarely would you come across couples who are not bored by each other. Now why don't they get Mukti? Thakur says that it is all about Kamini Kanchan, Lust for enjoyment and wealth. Now an old person whose senses, whose organs have become practically inactive, is beyond any kind of enjoyment. So why does he not get Mukti? Why can't he take his mind deeply to God, for the obvious reason that when we say we are bored, we are bored by that person. As far as the impersonal aspect of that thing is concerned it is still there. Rasa, when you love somebody, you love your son, you love your daughter, they are just an object. It is the Rasa inside you that goes out through your sense organs that goes out through your senses. Organs are external things and senses are inner things. Your rasa goes out and licks the loved object. Actually it is true. Those who have seen an animal giving birth to its babies, like a dog or a cow, it licks its new born dry. When human babies are born, they are wiped clean by the nurses and doctors and others. Animals lick them dry. After all, it is part of its own body. When you love someone, when you love your husband, when you love your wife, when you love your friends, when you love your parents, it is not the person. Person is just an object. It is the rasa from inside that goes outside. And that is why we don't get mukti, because one who is sick, one who is old, he may not be in a position to take out his rasa on certain other objects because his body does not permit it. But the tanker of the rasa , juice is full. It is just waiting to get a new body. Whenever a person says that he is sick of things, he is sick of a person,he is sick of that object. Let that object go away and a more suitable object come. The licking game again begins. This is what Prakriti does. It goes on conjuring up new objects. And that is how it goes on. It does not end. This is Maya.

That pure consciousness, Brahman, alone exists. But it just imagines the objects are there and goes out licking because according to Sri Ramakrishna it is Shakti. Now, those of you who are truly interested in understanding Hindu scriptures, the Upanishads, you need to understand how one becomes many. How the single becomes plural, There is no answer to it. The appearance of the many, the appearance of the plurality, this is something about which we have no idea. And that is why we use the expression Maya. Maya always means that those who are under its sway believe it to be fully true, like the magic that I was mentioning. When you are under its sway, you enjoy the magic. So wonderful! and those who are the thinking lot, the philosophers they keep on puzzling over it. And that is why there are so many philosophies and so many philosophers and they are explaining Shakti and Brahman and Maya and all. But one who has realised the truth, one who knows that Atman

alone exists, for him there is no Maya. The same Maya appears as three different things, as real, as a puzzle and that is unreal. It is inscrutable. There is no way you can understand Maya. If it is a pen, it is a pen for me, it is a pen for you etc. A new born baby may not understand that. If you are under Maya, you think that the objects that are before you are all real. Those who have a thinking mind, they puzzle over it. And those who have realised, know that there is no Maya. It is all Atman, it is all Brahman. This is being said in verse no 48.

The firebrand which is at rest, when not in motion is free from all appearances. This idea of appearance which for some is real which for some is puzzling, and which for others do not exist how do you classify it? How do you justify it? Anyone who has seen sapling coming out of the seed whether it be a physicist, a chemist or a philosopher or a poet, for all of them it is a fact. No one will question that. But Brahman, Shakti, Maya, creation, they are not like that. Those who know the truth, they know that there is no motion, no creation. For those who are under its sway, for them there is a motion. Now how do you justify this motion? It is called Maya, it is called Shakti, sometimes God's will etc. etc.. So, when a particular scripture is using a word, never contest it. Mandukya Karika and Sri Ramakrishna are not at odds. Similarly Mandukya Karika, and what has been said in Gita, and explained by Shankaracharya, they are not at odds.

We have a scholarly monk. He is trying to show Vijnanvada, Sri Ramakrishna and the difference between Sri Ramakrishna and Swami Vivekananda and God knows what. Simply means he understands nothing. Because they are not at odds, for those whom this world is real, Shakti is real. Once you realise that Brahman alone exists, Shakti becomes unreal. Not only unreal, you realise that it never existed.

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अलाते स्पन्दमाने वै नाऽऽभासा अन्यतोभुवः ।
न ततोऽन्यत्र निस्पन्दान्नालातं प्रविशन्ति ते ॥ Karika 49॥

When the fire-brand is in motion, the appearances (that are seen in it) do not come from elsewhere. When the fire-brand is not moved, the appearances do not go elsewhere from the motionless fire-brand. Further, the appearances, when the fire-brand is not moved, do not enter into the fire-brand itself.

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Now when the firebrand is set in motion, the appearances that are seen in it, do not come from elsewhere. There was a motion, there was an appearance, appearance of a circle or appearance of a straight line etc.. These things did not come out from somewhere. And when the firebrand is still, the appearances do not leave the motionless firebrand and go somewhere else. Nor do they enter the Alat. The appearance of a circle, appearance of a straight line etc., where did they come from? Did they come from outside? No. Did this appear from Alat ? No. Did they enter the Alat? No. Did they go somewhere else? No.

Because, all those geometric patterns that we had been thinking about, did not have any reality. If they had reality then we could have said all these. Just like that waking state, dream state they do not have any reality. That has been discussed earlier. So, the thing is we get enamoured by motion. Unfortunately that motion is not real. It is not true. And the appearances created by the firebrand, neither go anywhere, nor do they come from anywhere, nor did they emerge from somewhere nor did they enter somewhere. Exactly like that none

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न निर्गता अलातात्ते द्रव्यत्वाभावयोगतः ।

विज्ञानेऽपि तथैव स्युराभासस्याविशेशतः ॥ Karika 50॥

The appearances do not emerge from the fire-brand because they are not of the nature of a substance. This also applies to Consciousness on account of the similarity of appearances (in both cases)

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As far as this external world is concerned, the dream world is concerned, the sleep world is concerned, these are not objects. These are all appearances. Once I saw a cartoon about Darwin's theory of evolution. Somebody had drawn a beautiful cartoon, there is a zoo and there is a Chimpanzee, reading a book Darwin's theory of evolution. And he gleefully tells other members of the zoo. Do you know that the director of the zoo is my descendent? I was a student in those days. I laughed and I loved the joke. Just like that, if you tell your husband, if you tell your kid, if you tell your father that you all are just appearances, it will just be like the chimpanzee telling you that the director of the zoo is his descendent.

Appearances do not emerge from the fire-brand. Because its nature is not that of a substance. This applies, likewise to consciousness. If this pen has really been an object then we could have questioned where this pen came from. Did it come from consciousness? Did it come from somewhere else? Once destroyed, where does it merge? Mandukya says nothing.There is no subject object duality. We have discussed it in detail earlier. There is no subject object duality. So there is no object. If there is no object, how can it come from somewhere? How can it be born somehow? Just like the way in case of the Alat, the firebrand, the geometric figures, neither they are born, nor they come from somewhere, nor they go somewhere, nor they merge in Alat. Alat only was there.

Sri Ramakrishna beautifully gives the example of a magician, who moves his finger, people are watching his finger, then getting hypnotised and keep on watching the motion and they start seeing different kinds of sights. Somebody who knows the magic , knows that now only one finger and finger was moving, and nothing else. Since the objects do not have any reality they are neither born nor do they go anywhere. Verse no 51 and 52. It elaborates this idea further

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विज्ञाने स्पन्दमाने वै नाऽऽभासा अन्यतोभुवः ।
न ततोऽन्यत्र निस्पन्दान्न विज्ञानं विशन्ति ते ॥ Karika 51॥

न निर्गतास्ते विज्ञानाद्द्रव्यत्वाभावयोगतः ।
कार्यकारणताभावाद्यतोऽचिन्त्याः सदैव ते ॥Karika 52॥

When Consciousness is associated with the idea of activity (as in the dream and waking states), the appearances (that are seen in it) do not come from elsewhere. When consciousness is inactive (as in deep sleep) appearances do not go elsewhere from the inactive Consciousness. Further, appearances do not enter into it. The appearances do not emerge from Consciousness because they are not of the nature of a substance. These are always beyond our comprehension on account of their not being subject to the relation of cause and effect.
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The term used is Drabya(**द्रव्य)** and Annayatha (**अन्यथा**). Essentially it means objects and rather substance and other substance. Translated this means when consciousness is associated with the idea of activity. Actually there is no activity. Just there is an idea of activity that gets associated. In the waking and dream state, consciousness is associated with the idea of motion. We are attaching the idea of motion. The appearance that seems to arise does not come from anywhere else. So this is just an appearance. Waking state is just an appearance. Dream state is just an appearance. It does not come from anywhere. It does not merge anywhere. It does not go anywhere. It is just appearance, waking state just an appearance. . It is no wonder that people don't read Advaita. You can go on talking big word like Aham Brahmasmi and all those things, but not and living up to it, Sri Ramakrisha had beautifully said, for a true Vedantin, when he he has a cut in his hand, blood oozes out and he says no I am not hurt. Because you are pure Atman. No one is hurt. Not even your finger is hurt. Nothing. When consciousness is non active as in deep sleep, the appearance does not leave the non-active Consciousness and go elsewhere. So where did the waking state go, where did the dream state go when you were in deep sleep? No where. Neither it came out nor did it go somewhere. The appearance does not emerge from Consciousness for their nature is not that of a substance. The appearance of the waking state and the dream state are mere appearances. They are not substances. They are incomprehensible as they are not subject to the relation of cause and effect. This is a very serious issue. We had already discussed that there is no cause, there is no effect. You might have thought that it was one of those philosophical outcomes. But no, it plays a very important role. Because if cause and effect are true, then the waking state becomes true, worse, science becomes true, Physics becomes true. Can science and religion ever shake hands? In no way. Definitely not with Advaita Vedanta. Because the ultimate essence of Advaita Vedanta is in Mandukya Karika. And Mandukya Karika says there is no cause and there is no effect. Now if you take chilly does your mouth burn? Yes it burns. Why? It is just an appearance. It does not have a reality. Just to remind you, when Physics talks about the Big Bang it is talking about a reality,

it is talking about matter being real and energy being real. Even our Samkhya Philosophy and Yog Philosophy talk about Purusha and Prakriti, Purush being true and real , Prakriti being true and real. If Prakriti is true and real, then matter and energy are true and real. It has been shown how Samkhya and Yog cannot be correct. What Vedanta is saying is that if matter has an independent existence, then you can talk of cause and effect. But neither there is matter nor there is energy. Worse, there is no mind. It is the mind that is conjuring up ideas like subject and object, matter and energy and thoughts and all those things. Believe me it is frightening. And this is Maya, as we mentioned. Maya is real for the people who are under its spell. It is a puzzle for the philosophers. It does not exist for those who have realised the truth. So ideas like birth, death etc these all belong to Maya. They do not exist. It is just like the movement of the Alat, movement of the firebrand. Because Birth and death are not substances. These are not for real. So they do not come from anywhere. And definitely they do not come from consciousness. So, as far as this waking state is concerned, objects do not come from anywhere. Neither it comes from consciousness, so definitely it will not merge anywhere. It only proves that objects have no reality. And since objects have no reality, these states are all false. In conclusion it is all appearances. It is all appearances like the motion of the firebrand that creates geometric figures. In verse Verse 51 and 52 so, once again Mandukya goes back to why there can be no cause and effect.

53. Get out of cause-Effect

We have covered a long path of studying the Mandukya Karika. What is the summary of all that we learned? What exactly is special about Mandukya Karika? Naturally, when you are reading a work of philosophy you would like to know what is the central theme.
It is often said that, whatever work it may be, however voluminous it may be, whatever subject it may be, ultimately it can be summarised in 50 words. What exactly do you want to say? It is a different matter that in most cases people have nothing to say.There is a very funny story about one American gentleman, who used to travel around the world speaking on every possible topic. This is common among Americans. Once this gentleman was going around Japan and giving his lectures. Naturally there was a translator. When he started speaking, the translator said something, a sentence, and there was a clap. Again after half an hour the translator said one sentence and there was a big clap. And when finally the talk came to an end, the Japanese gentleman got up, said one more sentence and there was a huge clap, really huge. On their way back, the American speaker asked the Japanese

gentleman how he could sum up in three sentences? Very sheepishly he said, my first sentence was that as any American he thinks he has a lot to say, in case he has something to say, I will tell you. So there was a clap. In the middle he got up and said, till now he has not said anything new and there was a clap. And when it ended, he concluded as I had told you there is nothing new to say. And there was a huge clap.

Now there is a thing; either you have nothing to say, practically nothing new to say or if you have something to say, it can be put in at most 50 words. For example, let us talk of Swami Vivekananda. There are nine volumes of his work and every sentence requires elaboration. How can you put it in 50 words? Yes it can be. He himself has done it. When he says “Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this Divinity within by controlling nature internal and external”. That sums up all he has said and written. His entire work is just these two sentences. Look at his life. His whole life is just unfolding of these two sentences. Every phenomenon in his life is a manifestation of this utterance. Just an explanation of this utterance. And that is how he said education is the manifestation of perfection, perfection is divinity. When he saw poor and wretched and ignorant people and their suffering, his heart weeped to find the Divine was in such a bad shape.

Just like that if you would like to know, what exactly Mandukya Karika has to say in two sentences, it is :

Number 1: Atman alone exists. Which is infinite without any parts,

Number 2: The cause and effect that we see is an illusion.

And that is all that Mandukya Karika says!

Atman alone exists. Atman alone is real. It is infinite, and has no parts. It is pure consciousness. And the cause and effect that we see, actually is an illusion and naturally the waking state, the dream state and the deep sleep state, they are all illusion. Atman alone exists. A worker who makes something. Who creates something is all illusion. Oh! This idea can be frightening. My daily worship of God is an illusion. My meditation is an illusion. My relationships with all the relatives are all illusions. My birth , my death all are an illusion. My pain, my sufferings, my happiness are all illusions.

So why do the scriptures talk about creation, dissolution etc.? These are talked from two different standpoints. A general expression is Paramarthik and Vyavaharik . Paramarthik means the supreme standpoint or the absolute standpoint. Vyavaharik is the relative standpoint

There is a famous book - “Zen and the art of Motorcycle maintenance”. There the protagonist comes to India also and he meets someone who is preaching Advaita. The protagonist asks, what do you think of the war and the people who are suffering? The teacher says, well it is all an illusion. It is all Maya. I felt such repulsion towards the author! He had not understood Advaita, no teacher of Advaita will say all these are illusions. The

people who are suffering are in illusion. Their pain is real. Sri Krishna taught Gita to Arjun and said, you are beyond birth and you are beyond death etc.. and Arjuna said my delusion is gone, I will fight. After some days his son Abhimaynu died in the battle field. Do you think Arjuna might have told Sri Krishna that this is an illusion? Said that Abhimanyu has not died. His soul is all pervasive ?

(dehino 'smin yathā dehe , kaumāraṁ yauvanaṁ jarā l tathā dehāntara-prāptir dhīras tatra na muhyati II (As the embodied soul continuously passes, in this body, from boyhood to youth to old age, the soul similarly passes into another body at death. A knowledgeable person is not bewildered by such a change) (BhagavadGita 2.13))

No! He must have cried, because simply by listening to Gita he was not a liberated person. He even had Vishwarup darshan and saw God in all forms. But that is not knowledge. So you may have all the visions of God, but that will take you nowhere. Because ultimately it all belongs to the realm of mind. But, go through the descriptions of Sri Krishna, in Mahabharat, In Bhagavatam,. We don't find him crying ever. If at all he cried, it was to tease his mother. Because he is established in that wholeness, he is established in that oneness. In the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, we come across a very interesting instance where Sri Ramakrishna is told about Paohari Baba. Paohari Baba, who was a great Yogi, had kept a photograph of Sri Ramakrishna in the cave where the Baba stayed. When Sri Ramakrishna was told about this, he was slowly moving inwards. He said that is the picture of the external cover. It is a beautiful statement. Sri Ramakrishna used to stay in different states of existence. When he was in the realm of mind, he would laugh, joke and teach. And then effortlessly he could enter into that state of samadhi where it is all oneness.

One needs to understand these two fundamental things, that reality runs at two different levels. One is the absolute, which is infinite which has no part, where there is no change, there cannot be any change. Philosophically, logically it is not possible. And the second one is at the relative plane, is the our realm of the mind. In this realm of the mind, everything is possible. In this realm of mind there is God, there is worship and there is meditation and there is birth, there is death, there is suffering and there is joy. There is also heaven and there is also hell. Most people want to enjoy that . They want better. But there is never better because the good always comes with the bad. And then you will say that, no I don't want all these and I want to get out. It is not easy.

You cannot go to Advaita just like that. What we are studying here is just giving us the idea. The cobwebs are getting cleared. The undergrowth, the wild grass and wild growth that is there, are getting cleared. Believe me. You won't believe but those of you who have been listening to these talks unknown to you, lots of garbage is being cleared from your mind. This will not make you an Advaitin in a day, but the process of cleaning has begun. In the remaining verses these two ideas will keep coming in repeatedly. Atman is infinite so it

cannot undergo any change. The change that we perceive is very real in the world of the relative. When seen from the standpoint of the absolute, there cannot be any causality and hence there is no causality. Just this much. On to verse no 53.

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द्रव्यं द्रव्यस्य हेतुः स्यादन्यदन्यस्य चैव हि ।
द्रव्यत्वमन्यभावो वा धर्माणां नोपपद्यते ॥ Karika 53॥

Substance may be the cause of another substance. That which is not substance may be the cause of another which is not substance. But the Jivas (or beings) cannot be possibly anything like substance or other than substance

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A substance may be the cause of another substance. Actually Drabya (**द्रव्य)** is a technical term often translated as substance. Actually it is a technical term. Generally the Naya philosophy uses it. Drabya, that is substance, means anything that has parts. So a substance produces substance. Clay produces pot. Clay has parts. Pot has parts. Another term used is Anyatwa (अन्यत्व). Anyatwa essentially means the other one, otherness. The reference here is of Drabya. When the discussion is going on regarding Drabya the substance, the other would mean no substance. No substance means qualities. If we go by Nyay philosophy, because commentators have not explained what exactly Anyatwa means, this might be a term borrowed from some philosophy. But the common sense says since Drabya itself comes from Naya. the Anyatwa, the other one also has to come from Naya. And they talk about Drabya and GuNa, substance and quality. So quality will produce quality, substance will produce substance. Such a simple thing. However, Atman is neither a Drabya, nor does it have Anyatwa, quality. Colours can produce colours, sound can produce sound. Substance can produce substance. And some quality can produce quality. So, Naya and hence Vaisheshika, the two important philosophies talk a lot about Drabya and GuNa, substance and qualities. Whatever is there in this world can be summed up by these two- substance and qualities. Atman is neither substance nor quality. And hence it is impossible to have substance or quality in Atman. If you do not have substance and quality in Atman the conclusions will be immense. Then Atman can neither be the cause of anything nor can it be caused by anything. Those of you who have studied Gita, you might have come across these kinds of statements quite a few times: that Karya and Karan, cause and effect, this world is a display of cause and effect, nothing else. Cause produces effect, in turn effect produces cause. However cause and effect is possible only if something is a substance or has quality. Atman has neither. So neither it can be caused nor can it be the cause of anything.

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एवं न चित्तजा धर्माश्चित्तं वापि न धर्मजम् ।

एवं हेतुफलाजातिं प्रविशन्ति मनीषिणः ॥Karika 54॥

Thus (external) appearances (objects) are not caused by the mind nor is the mind produced by them. Hence men of discrimination hold the principle of the absolute non-evolution or negation of causality

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Manishi, the wise ones, are those who have realised Atman, those who have realised self knowledge.They say that this external , that is the objects are not caused by the mind, nor is the mind caused by them. Hence, thoughtful people hold to the principle of absolute non-creation. Verse 54 is quite simple, but its implications are profound .

What exactly is mind? Those of you who have listened to our talks on Raja Yoga, you will find that there is a talk, in the beginning itself, probably talk no 2 or 3 there is a discussion only on mind. What exactly is mind? The mind is yet to be defined by anybody and the mind cannot be defined by anybody. It is just not possible. Because, to define something you need to take help of simpler things that constitute the original. Suppose you have fruit juice, and you want to know what exactly the fruit juice is, then you break it into simpler parts and then you understand. You might have seen the content. Now in our world, the mind is the simplest thing. Mind being the simplest, how can you define it? Because you won't have any yardstick to measure it. To measure anything you need a yardstick.

Those of you who have some idea of very basic physics, you know that in the science museum of Paris, they have kept the standard weight of one Kg, and standard length of one meter. It is in platinum, iridium material so that variation due to temperature change is a almost nil. These days however it is based on the wavelength of orange-red light. We are not going to elaborate further as it is not necessary. The important point is that you need a standard to measure. One goes on dividing into parts to measure lower units and goes on multiplying to measure higher units. The bottom line is to measure anything. Suppose you have this one meter rod and you want to measure something which is just one centimeter long then it is not possible. But if you have one centimetre you can go on measuring a meter. Similarly, mind being the subtlest, you cannot know it. But the general perception about the mind are two. One of two is that matter produces the mind. These are the materialists. And there are the spiritualists who say that the mind produces matter. Swamiji has beautifully said mind produces matter and matter produces mind and this chain continues and depending on where you hold the chain first, the next thing will come automatically after that. So mind produces matter and matter produces mind. However, the problem with mind is that mind comes in many shades. It does logical precision processing, it also has volitions, it has emotions. It naturally confuses the scientists and all of us. When I say, I love you, you put your hand on your heart. But we don't love anybody from the heart. We love everyone from the mind (the head) and there is a technical term for it - Ahankara.

When the mind attaches itself with something or someone this is known as the junction Ahankar; when there is a loving junction you say there is love. When you want to run away from someone you say there is dwesh- dislike. But when we are angry at someone, we say we have thrown you out of my heart. At a lower level we say I have thrown you out of my mind. So, when they want to be intense, passionate they say, the heart. But there is no involvement of the heart. It is all mind. And naturally it confuses even the scientists and the philosophers.

The example used in Indian tradition is that of a potter, now this potter is the favourite example used in the Indian system of philosophy. Naya, Vaisheshika, Vedanta, Samkhya all use Potter because that is an act of creation, which is so easily visible. A potter thinks of an idea, thinks of a pot and he makes it. Then somebody looks at that pot, he gets the idea and the chain continues. First there is the idea in the head of the potter., it produces an object, and the object then produces an idea. It is such a simple thing. Waterman conceived of the fountain pen. Earlier they used to have reeds and there used to ink and you used to deep that Reed and write. We have seen this kind of writing in our childhood. And Waterman came up with the idea of fountain pen, where there will be a continuous flow of ink. And today when I have this pen, I look at this pen and I get the idea that this is a pen. There is a very funny episode about this potter and pot. Well I was at a center where there was a monk. He loved gardening and we did not have much space. There was just a rooftop and there he was having some flowers and small plants. There was a problem of the roots growing. Normally flower pots are conical narrow at bottom and wide at the top. I suggested trying a Beaker type shape where the upper part is narrow and the lower part is broad. So, now this could not be done in Kolkata. I knew some rural areas, some monks were contacted there, when he went to talk to potters, they just laughed at the idea. Anyway one potter agreed and some pots were made. It was such a big failure because it is a very simple, very simple principle that roots are generally tapered in shape. As they go down they are narrower. So you don't need a larger base. But the idea remains, I thought of something. passed it on to him, he caught the idea, he made the object, and it continued. Before that I had seen a beaker and that had given me the idea. So this continuous relationship between objects and ideas continues. This is what is “cause and effect”. This is what is being discussed here. It is called Chittaja - which means something that is born out of the mind (chitta). **एवं न चित्तजा धर्माश्चित्तं वापि न धर्मजम् । एवं हेतुफलाजातिं प्रविशन्ति मनीषिणः** - So the external appearances-the objects are not caused by the mind, because the mind is actually consciousness. Mind is non-different from Atman. This point , the mind is non-different from Atman, is a very subtle point. Normally we don't come across such utterances in any of the scriptures, that mind is consciousness. Sri Ramakrishna says, pure mind, pure Atman, they are one and the same.

Yog Shastra says Chitta Vritti Nirodh, when the ripples of the mind calm down, the mind itself becomes pure consciousness. In Raja Yog Philosophy, this is not said in so many words. But the idea is this. If mind is the same as consciousness, then there cannot be any cause and effect and if there is no cause and effect, there cannot be all these potters and the pot and potter's wheel and potter's stick. All these merge into one single consciousness. That is why the example they often use is dream. In dream you have so many objects, so many places, so many activities. You wake up, they vanish. Where do they merge? They merge nowhere because there was nothing, there never was anything. The verse says,

मनीषिणः - The wise one. Those who have known Atman, those who have known the self.

They say that the external objects are born, neither of the mind, nor these external objects create sensations in the mind. They cannot, because the objects are not produced, how can they create sensation? It is terrifying. Believe me it is terrifying to think that there is no birth, no death. There is no God to control us, there is no afterlife.

But what about all these sentences that we come across in the scriptures itself. For example Gita says, मम योनिर्महद्ब्रह्म तस्मिन्गर्भं दधाम्यहम् । सम्भव: सर्वभूतानां ततो भवति भारत ॥ (14.3). Lord says, I created this universe. What about the ideas of creation say in Christianity or other religions? Acharya Shankar beautifully now links up and says that these are for the people who have complete identification with the mind. Complete identification with the body. What will happen to them? Those who think that I am this body, those who think that by doing good, I will go to heaven, by doing good I will be creating good Karma. By doing evil I will gather sin, and once I die, I will get a new body, I will enjoy better, I will go to heaven and enjoy. What will happen to all those people? What about them? What about all the descriptions that we come across in our scriptures related to that? On to verse 55.

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यावद्धेतुफलावेशस्तावद्धेतुफलोद्भवः ।
क्षीणे हेतुफलावेशे नास्ति हेतुफलोद्भवः ॥ Karika 55॥

As long as a man persists in the belief in causality he will find the working of cause and effect. But when attachment to causality vanishes, cause and effect become non-existent.

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Here not only the existence of the world, but the very idea of the world is being negated. It says as long as a person clings to the belief in causality, he will find the working of cause and effect.

I have a friend. She is a doctor and extremely religious person and fully devoted to Sri Ramakrishna and Ramakrishna ideology. And whenever I try talking to her about the law of Karma being just a model, model to explain, she kind of gets furious. And she says it is an essential principle of Hinduism. In fact it is an essential principle of Hinduism. In my book the Hindu way, you will find I

have mentioned it. But the idea of cause and effect is only for those people who are identifying themselves with their body and mind. Here comes the word Avinibesh (अभिनिवेश). Avinibesh (अभिनिवेश) technically means those who have strong clinging to life. But Avinibesh can be applied to anything where there is very strong clinging. When you are holding on to life, you want to hold on to your body, when you want to hold on to someone, you have a very strong sense of avinibesh. And if you have such a strong clinging, you will believe in cause and effect, and if you believe in cause and effect then these things will continue. Dear Listeners, if cause and effect is a chimera, If the idea of cause and effect itself is a mirage, is an illusion, then what about science? Believe me, science is a big illusion. We had a brother monk here at the university. He has made a name as a mathematician. Once we were having some discussion when I just mentioned something from scriptures. He said, it is all a myth. Oh! My God, that was a great shock. I said science is also a myth. And he got so furious! How dare you call science a myth? I said science is a myth. Science is a complete myth. Try going deep into it. The very idea that most things are probabilistic, cuts at the roots of cause and effect. The moment you say that it is probabilistic, the very idea of Heisenberg's uncertainty principle, cuts at the root of cause and effect. Planck's constant cuts at the idea of cause and effect. Atomic physics wants to stay within certain boundaries of probability. Those of you, who are interested in the theory of evolution, I find it very interesting because, if you ask them any of these questions, if human beings are superior, and if we came from monkeys and chimpanzees etc, then why did every one of the species not become that? And they will come up with some wonderful solutions. It is like why human beings have two legs because God wanted us to fit into trousers. What kind of argument is this? I don't question evolution, evolution is very much true. We are evolving every minute. And many of you may not know that Darwin's idea of evolution of species has been debunked partially. Now they say it is the evolution of genes. Swami Vivekanada said,evolution of the soul in a species, soul is struggling to come out. In some cases it wants to, in some other cases it does not want to, for whatever reason it may be. In a village, two brothers stay. They want to grow rich. One says I will stay here and try to be rich. And another brother says I will go out and try to be rich. So simple. Hinduism accepts evolution fully. But not the way Darwin said, Darwin's theory of evolution, just a myth. You can go on explaining anything when you realize something. For example we try to fit in an airplane in Ramayan (Pushpak Rath). This kind of theory, this kind of idea where anything can be fitted into it is a myth. It is a bug of science.

Now what about cause and effect. We all know that if you eat chilly, your tongue will burn.Then there is cause and effect. But if there is cause and effect, cause and effect must work in 100% situations. Does it work as far as science is concerned? No it does not. In

verse no 55 this is what it says. As long as a person clings to the belief of causality, he will find cause producing effect but when this attachment to causality wears away, cause and effect become non-existent. You go and watch a river that is flowing very slowly and gently. There might be ripples because of the wind. Think of waves producing waves. In physics it is disturbance producing disturbance. But who produces whom. Nothing no one is producing. It is only water. We are so attached to our mind, we are so attached to our beliefs, we are so attached to our conditions, that we give these things grand names. We call them cause and effect. We call them causality. We call it Karmavada. And the more sophisticated ones call it science. It is all a product of just clinging. Simply because you are clinging on to a belief you are seeing it, and why are you seeing it? As you want to see it. This is Maya. The beauty of Maya lies in that it will make you see what you want to see. Just like dreams. The word that Acharya Shankar uses is Tatchittata. Almost similar to the expression Tanmayta. Tatchittata - your mind becomes so absorbed in something . In Yog Sutra we have Vritti sarupyam itaratra" (वृत्ति सारूप्यम् इतरत्र). If not established in the knowledge of the true self,you will be absorbed in ripples of the mind, thoughts of the mind. One of those thoughts, one very powerful thought, is Avinibesh. Tatchittata - you become identified there. See, it is not only about Avinibesh, you get identified with any of these vrittis, thoughts, waves. I would advise you to listen to our first two three talks in the Raja Yog series. That will make the ideamink more clear. What is this world? Tatchittata. Why do you love somebody? Tatchittata. Why do you hate somebody? Tatchittata. Or why do you want to be an achiever? Tatchittata. Why do you want to be just a lazy person doing nothing? Tatchittata. It is an idea, first you latch on to that idea, and then you become one with that idea, and then make your entire life revolve around that idea. And then comes suffering, heartbreaks, disillusions. Then you say no more and you realise that there is no causality, forget about birth and death, Birth and death, these are small aspects of causality, Causality is cause and effect. There is no causality, If there is no causality,then what remains? Pure mind, pure Atman and you realise they are one and the same. The goal is not to get out of bad habits. The goal is not to get out of sin. The goal is not to be devoted to some God. The goal is not to be pure. The goal is just to get out of Tatchittata, absorption. We had mentioned once that awareness increases eminence. We have lived for so long with the idea that causality is a truth, causality is a fundamental fact of life. That we cannot let it go. And because we cannot let it go, all this birth and death, misery and happiness, rebirth, heaven and hell, all these continue. Do they exist? They exist for people who are into Tatchittata, Tanmayata. You are so engrossed with that idea that it does not let you come out. On to verse no 56.

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यावद्धेतुफलावेशः संसारस्तावदायतः ।

क्षीणे हेतुफलावेशे संसारं न प्रपद्यते ॥ Karika 56॥

As long as there is faith in causality, the (endless) chain of birth and death will be there. When that faith is destroyed (by knowledge) birth and death become non-existent

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Now we look into Alat Shanti, extinguishing the world. As long as a person clings to the belief in causality, sansara will continue to expand. You might have heard of the expression in Physics - the expanding universe. For me, for you it is the expanding sansara or expanding world. The world expands. Sansara expands. Sansar is the only word we use. You think you will get joy by doing something and you go and get it. Like this beautiful story of a sadhu who had only one garment, his kaupin. The rats used to cut and destroy it. Then he got a cat to get rid of the rats. For the cat, milk was needed, so a cow was bought. Now to take care of the cow a maid was needed and for all this he had to get married and that is how **संसारस्तावदायतः** - kept on growing kept on growing. How big is the universe? Expanding universe? There is no expanding universe. It is you who expand the universe. Of course for yourself simply because you believe in causality. You are bored with life. You want some change. You want some excitement. You go out on a trip and during the trip you meet somebody and then there is some kind of bond, some kind of relationship, some kind of friendship ensues. Then you promise to meet again and write to each other again. And to call each other. The world, Sansara, expands simply because we believe in causality.

क्षीणे हेतुफलावेशे once you stop believing in cause and effect, and like the agnostics in Greek philosophy, question everything. You ask what is the guarantee that it will give me joy? Question it. Questioning the very idea of causality is a very big step in life, in philosophy of life etc, - **संसारं न प्रपद्यते** - and then the world stops growing for you.

But as your sansar expands, the more entangled you are. You want mukti. Sansar has to come back to that point. You can do this only by cutting at the root of cause and effect which is knowing that there is no cause and no effect. But what about the scriptures? They talk about cause and effect. They do talk about creation. This will be discussed later.

54. Advaita Vedanta - looking back

As we are proceeding towards the end, you will see that the ideas will be getting repeated and they will be simpler to understand. So before we proceed with the verses, let us have a look back.

Now before I continue, let me tell you about an incident which is much more than a reality check. We had a very learned and a great monk, Swami Vidyatmanandaji Maharaj. He was an American by birth and a great monk. And he had written quite a few books. One of them is A Y*ankee and the Swamis: A Westerner's View of the Ramakrishna Order* . and another is *What Religion is in the Words of Swami Vivekananda*. It is a very famous work published by Advaita Ashram. Towards his end, he was in Gretz, France at the Advaita Ashram for decades. And he had grown old, and he was requesting the headquarters to send a monk. Usually in all our foreign centers, the heads are all Indians. So, our In-charge monk, the head Swamy, jokingly asked Swami Vidyatmanandaji Maharaj that you yourself are so learned and there are so many learned monks in America, why do you have to keep on asking for monks from India to head the center. Vidyatmanadaji had famously replied that the reason for this is that, it will take another thousand years for America to understand and appreciate Vedanta. Vedanta can be understood and appreciated only by an Indian. If you don't have a monk to spare, give us a junior monk, even give us a novice brahmachari, he will be far suited to lead the center than an American. I am quoting from extremely authentic sources, from the person who was given this reply. You might find the answer quite shocking. And that too coming from an American.

Now this holds true for anyone who has not lived in India all his life. Unless you have not taken Gangaajal daily, Unless you have not taken Tulsi leaves daily, it is difficult to grasp Vedanta. Actually it is extremely difficult. I am seeing some of our monks, my brother monks, and the kind of things they are talking about Vedanta, someone is making it a pop Vedanta. Someone is making it a popcorn Vedanta. Someone is making it terrible. Recently I had to scold one of our very popular vedantic monks, what kind of thing are you dishing out? Stop this nonsense.

Now, where lies the problem. The problem lies both in the person who is listening to Vedanta and the person who is talking about Vedanta. If that person has slightest, even the slightest desire belonging to this world or hereafter , he cannot grasp Vedanta. It is a very strong comment but it is absolutely correct. There was a conversation with Mallik and Sri Ramakrishna and he said, I am not scared of being born again. Sri Ramakrishna says why don’t you just admit that you still have desire to enjoy. See the moment you accept this world to be existing, in whatever form, be it in the form of Vishishtadvaita, be it in the form of Dvaita, be it whatever form, call it this Vedanta, call it that anything, unless you realise that this is all mithya, non-existent, know that your heart is beating with desires. If you are a monk, little less desire. If you are not a monk, full of desires. This sounds quite critical , sounds very harsh, but that is a fact.

Now to understand Advaita, the easiest way is to look at Sri Ramakrishna’s life. I am presenting before you a very simplified version of Sri Ramakrishna’s life. We are not looking

at him as an incarnation but we are looking at him just as a person who was born and brought up in Kamarpukur, who was practically unlettered, because in those days very few people studied. Sri Ramakrishna was barely lettered. He knew how to read and write but that was nothing much and then he came to Kolkata in search of a job. In spite of all the stories that we read from Leela Prasanga about his visions and all, the bottomline is that he came to Kolkata in search of a job. A poor Brahmin who was not able to maintain his family while staying at Kamarpukur and this was repeated and reiterated to his own nephew Hridayram when Sri Ramakrishna said, look after all you have left your home, in search of money, it is only because of poverty that we are here, by we he meant him. The idea was that it is a truth and a fundamental fact as a human being, as a person.

Sri Ramakrishna and his relatives came to Kolkata walking all the way from Kamarpukur, in search of a job, in search of a pittance. And then being a Brahmin priest, he was into rigours of caste habit. Until his last day, he never ate anything from a non-Brahmin. Now I am mentioning it as it is very important for our discussion. And then during Puja he started singing songs of Mother Kali, and slowly he started questioning himself is this all real? Now mind it, presently let us not look at Sri Ramakrishna as an incarnation but Sri Ramakrishna the devotee, the sadhak, because even if he is an avatar, which he is, he is acting as the perfect spiritual seeker and that is what we would see now. So he does not question the world. He is not saying that the world is unreal. He is not saying that let us go to God and let's pray to God for this. He came physically to Kolkata walking all the way from Kamarpukur which is a distance of more than 90 Kilometers in search of barely ten rupees a month, which is equivalent to 2-3 thousand rupees today. And it was not enough to run his household. He was always in debt and slowly he started going deeper and deeper in Mother Kali. And then he had the vision of Mother Kali as the supreme consciousness, he started seeing things as consciousness and then he started saying things seeing Mother Kali as living embodiment who used to appear to him in different forms at different times, at different places. Mostly in and around Dakshineshwar. And then went deeper into various sadhanas. Tantra sadhana, Vaishnav Shadhans and the supreme Godhead of all those systems revealed themselves to him and finally came Advaita Sadhana under the great sage Totapuri. He initially refused. He was not willing in the sense that his mind was not going towards Advaita. Totapuri pierced the middle of his eyebrows with a glass piece , asked him to focus there and his mind rushed to that. He was deep into Samadhi for three days. When his mind came back after three days he saw everything as Maya and he also saw everything as consciousness, and he also saw everything as Mother Kali. Those of you who have studied the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna, very thoroughly you will see that Sri Ramakrishna is talking about the world as an illusion. Repeatedly he talks about illusion. This world is an illusion, He also talks about everything being pure consciousness where there is a

superimposition. Some kind of super imposition that makes it look like it has some kind of reality, where he says that he is seeing the goat that is being sacrificed, he is seeing the goat as pure consciousness, and the sword too pure consciousness. So some kind of reality from this world continues to be with Sri Ramakrishna, but not always, when he was in samadhi he was seeing the whole thing as a mass of consciousness. And this is what he taught when he was teaching or when he was teaching to ordinary people he was trying to teach them to come slightly above their mentality, where they are deeply attached to this world. There were devotees coming from various religious traditions and denominations. He was teaching them those realities. And there were some few who were ready for Advaita, like Swami Vivekananda. He taught Swami Turiyanandaji, Swami Vivekanada and others everything about Advaita Vedanta.

Initially Swami Vivekananda, then Narendranath Datta, was not willing to accept that everything is Brahman, and he joked and said WOW! This pot is Brahman, this that. Sri Ramakrishna touched him. And for the next three days, Swami Vivekananda was in that altered state of consciousness, where everything appeared to him as consciousness. This is the same that Sri Ramakrishna himself had experienced.

Now what do we get from all this? The most important thing is that we realised that reality for a person even if he is evolving spiritually can appear at different layers. So what Sri Ramakrishna questioned himself was whether the world was real and slowly the world started becoming little less real and from there Mother Kali became everything and then a time came when even Mother Kali vanished. And then, everything else came back again and yet everything was false, Sri Ramakrishna himself says, right now I am in that state where all forms are vanishing, Meaning Mother Kali is vanishing away. This is 1883 or 1884 like that. That was one or two years before he gave up his body in MahaSamadhi. So what exactly happens and why Advaita Vedanta is so difficult to grasp?

My job is to teach and I am teaching. I don't know how well you can grasp it. Don't you mind because these talks are not meant for one-off listening. After one or two years you would listen to every talk once again, the entire thing and the whole thing will get revived. The problem is that since our childhood we have been trained to think of this world as having an objective reality. I am the subject and this world has an objective reality and when it comes to God, we get stuck up there too. Whatever we have learnt, whatever we have learnt from this world we continue to think about God too. For example we mentioned just now how Sri Ramakrishna continued with his caste habits, he had his caste prejudices, but not at the ultimate level because in the ultimate level he knew that consciousness alone exists.

You will find very interesting the idea of judgement day of the Christian tradition. Judgement day is when God judges whether you will go to heaven or hell. Now the Judge judges by getting evidence because the judge does not know. But If you have seen a person do

something will you need evidence? A judge needs evidence because he was not there. He has not seen it with his own eyes. Do you mean to say that God is not ever present ? Do you mean to say that God is not all knowing? And do you think Jesus or some other prophet intercedes on your behalf, like a lawyer? This is how we have been trained to think of ourselves, of this world and of everything in this world. And that is what we superimpose on God too. Except Vedanta, that is Upanishads, most ideas in most of the scriptures talk about things like the Judgement day. These are simply laughable.

Sri Ramakrishna had said beautifully that if you eat radish, you will belch Radish. The world is so much inside you, that you will be belching all the worldly things. And you will think that, for example in India, Vedanta is often referred to by its critics as Mayavada. But Vedanta is not Mayavada, Vedanta is Brahmavada. Vedanta believes that Brahman alone is real. So why Mayavada? This is the tricky part. Everything that Sri Ramakrishna was talking about other than Consciousness belongs to Maya. What is Maya? It is inscrutable power , ignorance that makes one appear as many. Today somebody casually asked me about castes and oneness. And as usual they will go to Purusha Suktam or Gita - (चातुर्वर्ण्यं मया सृष्टं गुणकर्मविभागशः।The four categories of occupations were created by Me according to people's qualities and activities.) very good, fair enough. But even in an ordinary world like say Purana, say Srimad Bhagavatam, how do you find creation described? Brahma thought of creation. At first he mentally created Sanak, Sanadan, Sanatan and Sanatkumar. And next he mentally created those great sages who were responsible for the next generations. Two important things to be noted here is, first the creation itself was mental by Brahma, so maybe somewhere we are just a bubble in the thought of God. But more importantly Brahma did not create people who belong to Brahman , Ksatriya, Vaishya, Sudra. That is what the Vedas say. In the beginning there was only one caste and slowly they got divided as some people failed to live up to the higher standards. So they were made outcasts and they went away further. See, now when you want to pull it up and if you try to push your caste ideas on God too, what can anybody say?

But the bottom line remains that it is some kind of illusion. Brahma is one, and he thinks and creates, that creation is mental. Whether you call it projection or whatever you call it, bottomline is it is all mental thing. And yet it appears as multiple to us. There is multiplicity and multiplicity is very much real. How do you reconcile these two things? The only way to reconcile is if you accept that this is some divine power of God. This is what was said earlier in the Mandukya Karika - Brahman and Shakti. This is the language of Shankaracharya, not of Sri Ramakrishna. Shankaracharya uses the term Otoproto (ओतप्रोत), Inextricably mixed, the way, soil and water is mixed in mud. So, Advaita Vedanta cannot be MayaVada.

When Sri Ramakrishna, came back from Samadhi, he went all out to teach Swami Vivekananda, then Naraendranath, and he wanted Swami Vivekanada to do good to the world. What exactly did he mean by that? That till you are in Maya, till you are aware of your I-consciousness, till you are aware of your mind, till you are not in the state of Samadhi, till you have a body and you have a body consciousness, this Maya is real. Continue working accordingly. And that is why Vedanta runs at two different levels. And there are two different layers of truth in Vedanta. Paramarthik and Vyavaharik. How best to understand ? You see, very often we give the example of clay and dolls made out of clay or Gold and jewellery. But these are not very good examples although Upanishads themselves use them. The best example is , if you can think of a huge ocean where there are very small ripples, not waves, maybe a wave that is rising barely one centimeter. Not a meter. How will you look at those ripples? If you become Tanmay, if you become totally absorbed in watching the ripple, to you ripples may appear real. But if you even have the slightest awareness, it is all water. It is only when you have huge waves, suddenly you start thinking waves as separate from the ocean. The infinity of Brahman is something like that. A huge ocean where the existence of the individual, existence of the universe is not even like a small ripple, and that is why a person, who is into Advaita, who has realised this oneness, he realises that these ripples are nothing but pure consciousness. Depending on whether you are focussing on the ripples or on the ocean and the ripples, or simply on water, you will be talking about Vedanta, Vishishta Advaitavada, Advaitavada, Dvaitavada etc However the moment you talk about Dvaita Vada, Vishista Advaivavd or any vada, essentially you are focussing on the ripples. Essentially you are admitting the reality of the mind and if you are accepting the reality of the mind, it only means that somewhere your desire to identify with yourself, continues. Which simply means that you are not an honest vedantin. The moment you accept that the reality of this world, in any form, is ultimate reality, by ultimate reality in some form you are not an honest Vedanatin. Now that is a very strong statement coming from me. Because it ridicules the great Acharyas that came after Shankara, who taught this vedanta or that vedanta. Well fact is fact. If they could criticise Shankaracharya, I definitely have a right to disagree with those persons. We had one great monk, Swami Tapasyanandaji . He at times attacked Shankaracharya in his writing. So once I had once asked a senior monk why the revered Maharaj (Tapasyanandaji was a vice president and I was such a young monk) writing like this. It hurts me immensely to see Swami Tapasyanandaji Maharaj, being extremely critical of Shankaracharya. And then, I had two very interesting comments, one was that, Swami Tapasyanandaji was worried that Ramakrishna Mission monks are talking too much about Advaita without understanding it. So he wanted them to be kind of disciplined. And second was that he himself was from the land of Shankaracharya and he found that most of those people that talk about Advaita and Shankaracharya and feel proud of him without

understanding anything. So he kind of went vehemently against that. Whatever it might be, the bottomline is that even if you become passionate about attacking Advaita, there is something wrong with you. And Mandukya says, Advaita is not meant for the weak. The passionate people, whether they are into criticism or whatever it be, there is some kind of weakness, there is some kind of clinging to their mind, there is some kind of clinging to this world, There is some kind of desire in them. Desire to be famous, desire to be revengeful or vengeful etc.. That is why it becomes so difficult.

Now it is so difficult, but how can we know? No you cannot know, I cannot know. But me and you can take the first steps. What are the first steps? Start reading the Masters. Not the pop speakers and pop writers of today. But the masters. You will not understand much and that won't make any difference. Then go to a teacher who really teaches Advaita and who understands Advaita and lives the life of Advaita. Get inspired by him. Read more. Shravana, Manana, Nididhyasana. Listen, cogitate, think over it and slowly make your mind go into it. Slowly you will start having a theoretical perception of what Advaita Vedanta is. But it will be theoretical only. You might ask that more than 50 lectures have been completed, has it been a wastage of time? Not really . These talks are creating impressions but those impressions are so mild, practically invisible marks as if a rhino has been tickled with a pencil. But if you persist, slowly those marks will start becoming visible and a day will come when these marks will no longer be ordinary marks, and they will be like cut-marks left by a sword. And it clears the cobwebs of illusions that surround us. Underbush in which we are trapped. So if you think, in the beginning itself, you will start thinking of ईशा वास्यमिदं सर्वं यत्किञ्च जगत्यां जगत्। तेन त्यक्तेन भुञ्जीथा मा गृधः कस्यस्विद्धनम् ॥ (Everything animate or inanimate that is within the universe is controlled and owned by the Lord. One should therefore accept only those things necessary for himself, which are set aside as his quota, and one must not accept other things, knowing well to Whom they belong.

Think of God himself, becoming everything in this world. Can you think of God, whom you have not seen, about whom you have no idea? No you cannot. तद्विद्धि प्रणिपातेन परिप्रश्नेन सेवया ।उपदेक्ष्यन्ति ते ज्ञानं ज्ञानिनस्तत्त्वदर्शिनः II (BG 4.34). Learn the Truth by approaching a spiritual master. Inquire from him with reverence and render service unto him. Such an enlightened Saint can impart knowledge unto you because he has seen the Truth (BG 4.34).This learning from spiritual Master is important.

We had a young monk here at the university. Now he is not here. He had just joined, maybe the first six months or one year and he was working on some academic thing, philosophy etc. He asked me some questions. I said Shankaracharya has said something like this. He

said ,I will not accept. So ultimately one day, I had to work very hard just to find out the quotation. I gave him the quotation. He saw it but as it went against his academic thinking. That unsettled him, he could not accept it. From that day onwards, I never talked to him about philosophy. Gossiping was ok with him and I found that he was a perfect gossiper. As an academician, the less said the better. This is the problem. You have not sat at the feet of the Masters. Acharya Shankar says beautifully that a person may be knowing all the scriptures, he may be a great scholar, treat him as a fool, if he has not learnt from the tradition. Where is the tradition? Vedanta has to be learned from the tradition, and slowly slowly you get into it and as you get into it, slowly your mind starts resonating with the vibrations of Vedanta. You start doing and finally you reach that stage where your mind becomes completely one with the idea of Vedanta, But you have not reached the goal yet. Finally the actual realisation will dawn upon you, the way it dawned upon Sri Ramakrishna! And then you realise Aham Brahmasmi, I am Brahman, everything else is Maya, everything else is illusion. I alone exist.

Now before I continue further, this is a talk I wanted to deliver because after this there will be lots of repetitive ideas here and it becomes quite easy and maybe we won't get a chance. Verse no 56 talked about how this world gets expanded only for persons who are identified with causality.

We are moving towards the end and you will find that the verses are now slowly becoming repetitive. The ideas are getting repeated. The previous talk was on verse no 56 and that it means that this world exists only for people when somebody clings to causality. The existence of this world is for those who cling to causality. On to verse 57.

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संवृत्या जायते सर्वं शाश्वतं नास्ति तेन वै ।
सद्भावेन ह्यजं सर्वमुच्छेदस्तेन नास्ति वै ॥ Karika 57॥

All this is seen to be born on account of the illusion of experience (due to Avidya);therefore nothing is permanent. All, again, as one with the Ultimate reality is unborn. And therefore there is nothing like destruction.

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Says that this entire universe is created by false knowledge, i.e., Ajnana. Therefore nothing in it is eternal. Everything again as one with Ultimate reality is unborn. Therefore there is no such thing as destruction. Essentially this verse 57, from where we start today, is talking about two layers of reality, popularly known as Paramartha Satta and Vyavaharik Satta. Absolute truth and the relative truth.

It is a very beautiful verse.Those who are extremely interested in Mandukya Karika and Vedanta, should memorise this particular verse. This entire universe is created by false knowledge. Now staying within the realm of false knowledge you cannot question this false knowledge. Naturally you will ask me how I know this is all false. Because I trust my

teachers, the way you trusted your moms when you were kids. And my teachers trust Sri Ramakrishna. Sri Ramakrishna did not trust scriptures. He was scripture himself. He realised it. He saw the truth. So my acceptance of Advaita or whatever religious philosophy it be, because I don't have any realisation, and my theoretical understanding of Vedanta or for that matter any religious spiritual matter is quite meagre, pretty meagre. But I have learnt from great masters. They were great. When I say false knowledge etc. I am being like a parrot, I am repeating those words. But I am also struggling to reach that level. That is why he says the entire universe is created by false knowledge and therefore nothing in it is eternal. In this world of Maya nothing can be eternal. The moment that supreme Brahman, that supreme consciousness covered by this falseness of knowledge appears everything becomes non-eternal. Why? Because it is not its nature. You might have friends, you might have relatives, whom you might have told at some point of time, when that person was angry, when that person was hurt, when that person was depressed, “come on, it is not like you. You are a brave person. Your Mom must have told you at some point of time. come on my son, you are so brave”. The idea is if you go out of your nature, you will not be able to hold on for long. Once you come back to you, you will be able to hold on as long as you wish. Brahman being the consciousness, consciousness being Brahman, and by its nature being infinite and pure consciousness and pure existence, the moment it appears in the realm of Maya as relative existence, limited knowledge and limited joy, it cannot stay there. Then it cannot be permanent. So people like me, you, me and all who want to go back to our nature, we are struggling to study scriptures, we are struggling to meditate, we are struggling to go back.

For others they are enjoying life. Let them enjoy. They want to enjoy the knowledge of Brahman, maybe in the form of academics, in the form of science. Some say science is my God. If he enjoys it, let him enjoy it. There is nothing wrong with it. After all that knowledge is also Brahman. When you are enjoying, when you are enjoying the world, this and that of the world, you are enjoying the light of the world. The joy of the world. But it is a limited joy. Someday you will get fed up, someday you will say no more. I read somewhere somebody had asked if I become pure consciousness if I become Atman will I be able to enjoy movies and cricket. A very interesting thing! But why do you have to be one with consciousness? You are already enjoying . Why worry? You are already in your heaven. Why worry? Pure consciousness is not meant for you.

Then It says that everything again as one with ultimate reality is unborn, So this pen is never Brahman. This pen is not Brahman. if you take away its upadhi, the superimposition that makes it appear like a pen. There is pure Brahman, but the pen is not Brahman, mind it. Pure existence that appears as limited to pen. It appears, it is not. The transformation is not real. Had the transformation been real, as in the case of gold and jewellery, the

transformation was real, In that case you could have said that this is that. Because that transformation is real, in the case of Brahman and this pen, transformation is not real. So it is wrong to say that this is Brahman.

What about Sri Ramakrishna seeing those utensils, during worship as consciousness? Absolutely true. People who have realised the truth can at times see the light of consciousness within this pen too. Every time you talk about a pen, actually you talk about limitedness. So it is absolutely wrong to talk about all is God, all is Brahman. Brahman alone is real. And everything that appears is Manifestation only. Every Vikar, every manifestation that you are seeing are just play of name and form.This is bit difficult to grasp, when you keep on listening when you keep on thinking when you start taking the first steps slowly the idea starts sinking and as the idea starts sinking it also start become more and more clear.

Here we saw the expression **संवृत्या** Samvritya - Essentially this words says that truth is at two stages, it is layered, One is the absolute and on which there is the play of the relative. What we see as the world, what we say as the limited "I", all belong to the realm of Vyavharick or relative world. The other layer is The Paramarthik or the absolute which is unchangeable.

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Questions & Answers & Discussions

1 Is Brahman a state? Is Maya too Brahman?

Brahman is not a state but reality. Brahman is THE reality.

All are not Brahman. Brahman is everything that appears to you. Maya never appears to you. Because Maya does not appear to you, Because Maya does not appear to you, so you can't talk about Maya as an object. This pen appears to me. So, in essence, its essence, its reality lies in being Brahman. This appears as a pen because of Maya. But in fact the next verse they will say sach maya na vidyate. Maya is that does not exist. We never say Pen does not exist, Pen fully exists. We are making use of this pen, because of Maya, yet Maya does not exist. So, this question is Maya too is Brahman answer is NO.,

2. Objective reality

In Mandukya Karika, in Kathopanishad, we were discussing objective reality.The idea of objective reality is ingrained in us since our childhood. To know objective reality, you need to have a subject. No doubt about that. Such a simple thing.

Now what Acharya Shankar said is a very simple thing. Whatever you may be aware of or not aware of, you are always aware of I-ness. Even a newborn baby has awareness of his or her I-ness, in the form of hunger. When she feels hungry and she cries. So I-ness is always there. That famous philosopher Descartes had said Cogito, ergo sum – I think therefore I exist. So existence and thinking are linked. So the sense of the idea that I exist cannot be denied. The question is how you see yourself. This has been beautifully illustrated in the famous story of Indra and Virochan. Indra was the King of gods and Virochan was the king of Asuras. They both went to Prajapati to know the secret of

Atman. And to make the story very simple Prajapati said you are that. That is I am that. Aham Brahmasmi. And Voroichan concluded that this body is me and said let us eat, drink and be merry. Indra also thought that, but after some time he had doubts. And slowly he thought it is not this body but Prana, not Orana but mind and like that and slowly everytime he went Prajapati would ask him to meditate etc. and finally he realised that I am pure consciousness. How do you realise that pure consciousness? Acharya Shankar explains that when I perceive this pen, or any object, says, we have two kinds of Vrittis, two kinds of mindfulness, two kinds of ideas coming simultaneously from any object that we perceive with our five senses or through memory. One is the existence of this pen,and second is the idea of the existence of this pen. Now what happens if this pen is broken or destroyed? The consciousness associated with this pen, the idea of knowing this pen goes away, the existence of this pen goes away, but the idea of existence continues in this say microphone. And what if this microphone is also destroyed? All the microphones are destroyed? Even then the idea of existence continues in some other form. The bottom line is that if you continue with this and you destroy every object then what remains?

This is where Buddhists and Vedantins differ. One will say that it is all void. But the moment you say it is all void, who is saying it is all void? I am saying it is all void. That means the sense of I-ness is continuing. The sense of existence is continuing, You are contradicting yourself. What Vedanta says is, what is there is there. Whatever is there is there and what is there cannot be expressed by words. because the mind, the way we understand the working of mind cannot comprehend it. Sri Ramakrishna talks of pure mind, mind that has become pure, What is pure mind? Where the mind has no ripple.

If you want to sail in an ocean, under normal condition I am saying, you have to measure the waves but if there is no wave how do you know the distance ? Coleridge's famous poem Rhyme of the ancient Mariner, says "water water everywhere, not a drop to drink". There he explains this, the water has become totally calm and you don't know whether you are moving or not. I mean of course you make use of the Sun and the stars. But think of the fathomless ocean, can you work out? No you cannot. It is the ripples that make you think about whether or not you are moving. You need to have some relative objects. So what Acharya Shankar says is that, this existence because I had this sense of I, that I cannot be annihilated. And when this nothing, no object, no mind, existence continues, and this existence is Brahman, Sat. He does not say Brahman, he says Sat. and you become aware only of that which exists. So that knowledge, Chit, and you love what you know, you love what exists, Ananda. This is Satchidananda. So Sat, Chit and Ananda these are one and the same. Interestingly even if we let go of Shankaracharya, Sri Ramakrishna during his Nirvikalpa Samadhi experienced exactly this and we have testimony of hundreds of saints who had this kind of experience. So we cannot question that. Where does the problem lie?The problem lies with I-ness. If somebody says, I want my I-ness to be there, in what form I want to love God, I want to taste God. Then what happens? Then Sat Chit Ananda they do not become one. They do not become an inexpressible truth. But they become qualities of the Supreme, because the mind continues. The moment "I" continues, mind continues, mind the way we understand, however pure. So this Vaishnavism becomes correct and he does not care. Ramanuja does not care for Advaita. He does not. It may be the truth, Advaita may be

the truth. But I don't care.That is what very famously said, I want to taste sugar, I don't want to become sugar. So will you say that dualism is not correct? It is fully correct. Vishishta Advaita Vada is fully correct. Why? Because Advaita is correct. These things we have discussed earlier.
Sometimes infants speak in the third person. Is it because they don't have I-ness? Is it because they can consider themselves also as an object? But that proves I-ness. Because even when they are seeing their own body as an object ,I am talking about what he did. So the sense I-ness, "I saw him - him meaning himself, the sense of I continues. So, well I hope any kind of reason. No dear Taraknathji. Advaita has no other spelling.
It may be said that every philosophy is ultimately a manifestation of Advaita philosophy only. Advaita has no quarrel with any system of philosophy. Because the moment you accept that mind is there, the moment you accept Maya is there, automatically everything becomes real. Why? As many minds, so many philosophies. So there cannot be any quarrel with that.

3. Can ignorance affect an enlightened person like Sri Ramakrishna?
No never.

4. Do enlightened persons get angry? Because once Totapuri became angry with Sri Ramakrishna?
See the idea is if you say that Totapur became angry, Sri Ramakrishna used to become angry like anything and Swami Vivekanada's anger you cannot imagine. The kind of language he used. And Sri Ramakrishna, the kind of language he used with his own relatives. And Hridayram, his nephew says Oh baba! I am your nephew. Don't use this language, Sri Ramakrishna says so what? But in our case, our anger leaves a mark. Which makes us react again. In the case of these enlightened persons, these marks are more like marks drawn by water only on the floor. So the mark will be there for a while, once water evaporates there is no line. So, these impressions do not create further actions or more importantly birth, rebirth. No they dont. So, impressions as we understand are not created by these emotions. But emotions will be there, however superficial, whenever you are in this world, your prejudices will be there, your habits will be there, your tastes will be there and your emotions will be there. Passions NO. emotions Yes. There is a difference between emotions and passions.
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55 Maya - A discussion

Before we process farther, it will be good to discuss how Vedanta looks at Maya once again, because very often people get confused with Maya.
Maya is defined as the power that covers real knowledge with ignorance. Ignorance is in two forms - Non-perception and wrong perception.

Sometimes you feel like you see something which is actually not there. This happens very often when our mind is covered by prejudices. Recently I have come across a lady, who writes a lot on Quora forum and she seems determined to undermine everything that the Rishis have said and everything that Hindu scriptures say. Quotes are selective. I don't think she has studied. And if she has studied then there is non-perception. For some reason she does want to see. So, either you are not seeing me, it is hidden from you or you are seeing , but seeing wrongly. Very often the example that we use is of rope and the snake. There is a wrong perception in that.There knowledge is also covered by some kind of ignorance. And then there is also non-perception. For example when there is a very big thing, we cannot see distinct things. Also we cannot see things which are very near. They are also examples of Maya only. Maya is a term used as an overarch. Covers too many connotations, too many ideas and different kinds of ignorance. Every kind of ignorance, where there is non-perception or wrong perception, is covered under Maya.

To explain Maya Swami Vivekananda took the example of a mother who loves her son who continues to abuse the mother. The son exploits and yet she cannot stop loving him. Earlier we didn't have these problems in India. Now from the time that people have started criticising Hindu values ,these things have increased and we often hear of cases where someone even murders his parents. This is very sad. We did not have these things earlier, we cannot go back to what it was. And we must not. However the kind of cruelty we are seeing all around born of materialism is pathetic.

Me, you all of us must have faced such situations in our life when we wanted to get out of some relationship, but we could not. Because our emotions were so powerful that sometimes even if we wanted to get out we could not.This is Maya. At other times we did not see, which everybody else was seeing, there were signals we did not see. All these are Maya.

Those opposed to Advaita Vedanta, persons like the great saint Ramanuja, Madhwacharya, attacked Advaita Vedanta exactly on the point of Maya. For example they asked where does Maya reside? Surprisingly Acharya Shankar has answered all these things. And yet I wonder why these great sages who give rise to great Sampradyay, spiritual traditions, why they talked like this. I fail to understand. Maybe they were too emotionally attached to their Ishta. Because when you are very deeply attached to your Ishta, you cannot see beyond your ishta, Like Sri Ramakrishna also did not want to see beyond his Ishta, Mother Kali. Maya is for the person who is under Maya. A person who is in darkness he is in darkness. He does not know what is light, He does not even want to see light. Those who are in light, they can feel the darkness of others, but they themselves are not under darkness. And the person who is in darkness, if he wants to see darkness, he cannot see darkness with darkness. And if the light arrives, there will be no darkness to see. Idea being those who are

under the spell of Maya they are under the spell of Maya. They do not understand. It is only the others who understand. But it cannot be shown to others. The kind of problem you face, the kind of emotional attachment you have with certain things, certain objects, certain persons, others will never understand. Similarly you cannot understand my weakness, my attachment to different things. It is not possible.

Those who have seen the light, those who have attained knowledge, they say that Maya does not exist. It never existed. It is like the case of a person who was imprisoned, comes out and says well I was in the prison and now I am out. A person who follows Advaita, who studies Upanishads, who gets trained under a very good teacher, finally realises oneness with the divine. He is then out of Maya. He will never say that I am now out of Maya. He will say, I was never under Maya because Maya never existed.

Swami Vivekananda stated that Maya is a statement of fact. It exists, if you can feel it, well and good. If you cannot feel it, either you don't want to feel it or you are beyond it. It is a very simple thing. So asking where Maya exists, and who created Maya, etc. are mere word play. These are word wrangling, idea wrangling. It leads you nowhere. You simply say that well this is my Ishta. I love my Ishta. You want to join, come join.

For example, nowadays I don't go out much. But earlier I used to and some young people started loving me and they wanted to be with me. And in whatever language you may put, quite a few young people joined the Ramakrishna Mission because of me. When I say, because of me, I was just the medium. Because that Vairagya had to be within them. Otherwise they could not have. So it simply has to look as this is my way of life. Nowadays when I am invited, I politely refuse. I don't want to go anywhere because it is meaningless. People should follow you, seeing your way of life. Now even if you are talking why initially get into word wrangling. If you find something seriously wrong with this system, you can point it out. There it ends. You don't have to, so somehow I am not very appreciative of this kind of discussion.

So Maya is a statement of fact and it is not only that Gita and Upanishads talk about Maya. Shankaracharya talks about Maya. Sri Ramakrishna talks about Maya. Swami Vivekananda talks about Maya. so there is no reason to think that Maya is a wrong idea. Summing up Maya is something that appears to be there. Yet it does not exist. Earlier also we discussed this. This pen is our favourite example, it is a product of Maya, But why? Because it appears to exist. It is there, I am making every use of it. But it does not have a permanent reality. Permanent reality is that which is not limited in any way, whether by object, by time or by space.

What about the different relations that we have? We have our parents, we have our friends, we have our loved ones. What are they? A perfect case of Maya. Because they are very much there, but there is no guarantee that they were your parents in the previous birth. And

to talk of marriage people say that marriages are made in heaven and marriages are for seven births I tell you, believe me dont take me otherwise, the very idea is so frightening! Living with the same person for seven births! Getting up every morning and seeing the same face for seven births! Oh my God, what a frightening prospect. But this is Maya. People want that. So what will happen in the eighth birth? Probably the counting will begin once again after that. This is Maya. It appears to be there, you make use of it and then you realise finally that it does not exist. It leaves you. Not only that it leaves you, you find that its existence itself is extinguished. Your parents, you depend so much on them, you make use of them, without parents you couldn't have grown, I mean most of us. Then when you find your parents are gone, your life continues and then you realise that well you made use of your parents, and you grew up. You made use of your friends and you grew up. You made use of food and you grew up. You made use of thousands of things and you grew up. If you don't grow up making use of things, there is something seriously wrong with you.

But, what is the use of Maya? Don't take Maya as an illusion. Don't take Maya as a delusion. Don't take Maya as false knowledge. Maya is something which appears to be there but it does not have a permanent reality. And yet we make use of it to grow. If you are not making use of it to grow, there is something wrong with you. For example if somebody says that this person is my inseparable friend, you sink there, stuck up there. Generally this does not happen with friends. Sometimes it happens in case of love, conjugal love or whatever kind of love you may say. This is disastrous. You are ruining yourself. Because it was such a golden opportunity where you had somebody whom you love and you could have easily grown up. You did not. Rather you sank. Next time you will get a far worse person. A far worse object and you will have to start from a much lower level. Just remember this. Maya is that kind of ladder which helps you to go up on the roof, ladder is not roof and yet you need it.

So, we have to use different kinds of examples to just make us understand. Its ultimate goal is to make us grow. Normally you might be thinking that Maya is a delusion. Maya is not a delusion. Maya is God’s power. Maya is God’s power that stays with God. Appears as the world and we make use of this world to go back to where we have come from. Think of yourself standing on a hilltop and somehow you fall down a crevice or say a well. The rescuers make arrangements, put a rope and you catch hold of that rope and slowly climb up. Or you are pulled up. There is no other way, Maya is that rope. Maya is neither the well , Maya is neither the place where you stood, Maya is not your rescuer, Maya is not the rescue, Yet just like that rope, Maya helps you to come out. We can go on using many different kinds of examples so that idea gets impressed.

Now reality now runs at two levels. Absolute and relative. This is a very serious problem with Vedanta and extremely difficult for people to accept and live by that. In Vedanta there are two levels of reality. Absolute and relative. The relative is that which is run by Maya. It is run

by Shakti. God's power. Call it by any name, absolute is absolute. No rule of Maya applies to the absolute. Nothing of this relative world, this world that belongs to Maya, applied there. Note that you are studying Vedanta and if you want to understand Vedanta, know that you can go on asking questions, but you will not understand because you are standing within the realm of Maya and trying to ask questions about the absolute. And you are trying to ask questions about Maya itself. It is not possible. Think of you have put on your shoe and now you want to lift your shoe up, with the shoelace. You cannot. Newton's third law of motion applies and action and reaction being equal and opposite you cannot lift. Nor can you lift yourself up because of the gravitation. Just like that when you are within Maya, you cannot ask questions about Maya. Worse, you cannot ask questions about the absolute because that reality belongs completely to a different plane. What is the proof of all these? The simplest proof is that when we were kids, we saw reality in a particular way and as we grew up there was a mental evolution involved and as we evolved our perception of the world, our perception of the reality changed. That shows that reality keeps on changing, it shows that perception of reality keeps changing. And scriptures talk about it. Vedas, Upanishads talk about it, Gita talks about it, and great saints, greatest personalities have talked about it. So there is no reason to believe in this concept of Maya.

There is one gentleman, who tends to get abusive at times, and he feels that Advaita is all wrong and Ramanuja and Madhwacharya are being criticised. The problem is that, people who come with attachments like that, neither do they understand Advaita nor do they understand anything that we are saying to explain. Advait is about something which is absolute. Relative is something which belongs totally to this world. For example Physics, Chemistry etc., they belong to this world. But there is a third stage when the absolute appears nearly as absolute within the relative. That is personal God. Personal God, God with form is non-different from the absolute. This is something people do not want to understand. So, people who belong to the dualistic mode of thought or qualified non-dualism like Sri Ramanuja, what are they talking about? They are talking about that same absolute appearing within the relative. Why? Because they were devotees. They wanted to retain their ego. And actually there is no contradiction between these two. That is what Sri Ramakrishna has repeatedly said. However, Advaita is the last word that is what Sri Ramakrishna said "Advaita - sesh Katha". Simply because you have your emotions, does not mean that you will compromise with the truth and that is why Gaudapada has given a thorough explanation of all this.

Now let us get down to our verse number 57 once again.

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संवृत्या जायते सर्वं शाश्वतं नास्ति तेन वै ।

सद्भावेन ह्ययजं सर्वमुच्छेदस्तेन नास्ति वै ॥ Karika 57॥

All this is seen to be born on account of the illusion of experience (due to Avidya);therefore nothing is permanent. All, again, as one with the Ultimate reality is unborn. And therefore there is nothing like destruction.
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We have discussed it already. This entire universe is created by false knowledge. False knowledge means Maya. Therefore there is nothing in it as eternal, nothing as destruction, because everything, within Ultimate reality is unborn. We know Atman is beyond all these and unborn. Yet scriptures talk about creation and destruction and we have also mentioned during discussion. Karika explains it absolutely clearly. Says that whatever is there in this world, this world, is the world of the mind. This is the Empire of the mind. In this empire of mind, everything is created by Maya. As we already know that the mind has Vrittis or ripples, this is Maya. Mind without Vritti is one with Atman. Let us not unnecessarily get into Atman for this as even Patanjali's Yog Sutra very clearly defines Chitta Vritti Nirodha - "Tada drashtuh svarupe avasthanam" (Yog Sutra 1.3). If Chitta Vritti Nirodha is there ripples of mind stop completely then you become one with Purusha. That is Atman. And at other times, -"Vritti Sarupyam Itaratra" (Yog Sutra 1.4) - you are what your mental thoughts are. Mental ripples are. Thoughts are mental ripples, mind is Maya. Mind which is not active, a mind which is not in a state of agitation, is one with the absolute.

Whatever creation is there is within Maya, Maya is one with mind and mind is one with time, space, causation. All creation, all destruction belong to mind. All creation, all destruction belong to Maya. Atman has nothing to do with it. God does not create. God does not destroy. Then why do we use these words? The expression that they use is just to make us understand, just to give us a common understanding.

Reality runs at two levels. When we talk, when we explain scriptures, they need to be explained clearly from two standpoints. One is absolute and the other is relative. When we are in this relative world, for example I am talking about myself. Whatever little Jap-dhyan I might have done, whatever scriptures I might have studied a bit, I know I am totally fully absorbed in Maya. So for me , whatever is there, this world is true. The pleasure and pain, success and failure, Birth and death, everything. Everything is real for me. Creation destruction is real for me. Then why am I talking of this Advaita? Because in this Maya I have teachers. The teachers under whom I studied belonged to this Maya. I trust Maya, and hence I trust my teachers. And those teachers told me that well there is a reality beyond it and so I believe their words. Now when I am talking about Advaita, I am talking just from belief, nothing beyond it. It is not yet true for me. Well a certain kind of conviction is there, but not full conviction. If you want to be fully convinced of these truths, you have to go deeper in spiritual life. At the level of the absolute, these things do not matter at all. And the level of the absolute there is no Dharma, no Adharma, there is no paap or punya. There is no virtue, there is no sin. There is no birth, there is no death. There is no duality of any kind.

Absolute is absolute, absolute is infinite. Absolute is unchanging. But absolute has certain traits and those itself are absolute. It exists conscious of the nature of joy. And that is what gives you power. Because it is all consciousness, because it is all knowledge, it thinks, there is creation.

So, what is the conclusion from that? Entire creation is just a bubble , it's a mental bubble. Mental is not the right word,but anyway for us to understand, it is some kind of mental bubble. When Brahma creates, he creates from his mind. He thinks and there is creation. What does it imply? Entire creation is a mental bubble, in the mind of Brahma. Why do they use this kind of example? To impress upon our mind, so that we don't take this world as ultimately real. We take things of this world too seriously. We take our emotions too seriously. We take our quarrels, we take our hatred, and we take our love too seriously. They are there, they help us, they make us grow. There it stops. Nothing beyond it. Make use of it, grow and be free. Be free. That is the only message that these emotions want to convey us. If we fail to realise that, if we fail to make use of it, we have to come back, we have to go back to those emotions. For example let us take the case of anger. Anger is something that needs to be discarded . Because anger holds you back. Anger hurts you, anger hurts you more than the person on anger is expressed. What is the best example you can think of? Mother. A mom might get angry with her kids. Mother may sometimes take out her frustration on their kids. Once I saw a very beautiful scene at Belur Math. I was walking and there was a family who had come from some village. They must have heard of Belur Math and they had come to visit. They had a young boy of 10 or 11. He was running here and there. He was acting naughty. And something went wrong. His mom gave him a slap. And she instantly put her arms around her son and pulled him deeply close. It was such a moving sight. Mom was angry. She gave him a slap. That is something quite common in India. And yet the pain that was experienced by the son was nothing compared to the pain that was experienced by the mom. And to get rid of that pain, she pulled her son tight. I must have seen such scenes many times. But this scene never went out of my mind. It remains vividly sculpted in my memory. In life also the same thing happens. When you are angry at someone, you hurt yourself more than you hurt the other person. You don't even realise that. That is how the harm is done, The world teaches us to get rid of anger, and when you don't get rid of this anger you don't even realise that. When you don't get rid of this anger, the bubble becomes a ripple, ripple becomes a wave and finally the wave deluges you. It causes such a disaster that you have to begin nearly from the beginning. That is how it goes.

Acharya Shankar comments Maya is very much real, for people who are in Maya, who accept this world as real. By accepting this reality you grow and go beyond this Maya. This is known as relative (Laukik). Beyond that, is our goal - Paramarthik", the absolute. He says that when you look from the highest standpoint, everything is Atman. When you look from

the lower standpoint, reality appears completely different. I remember I used to ask questions to my teacher very often. I was quite curious about Advaita and whenever I asked him questions, very often he used to say, look you have once again fallen into the pit of duality. The problem is when you want to understand Advaita you have to get out from the pit of duality, which we cannot do. It takes time. Nowadays, there are so many talks on popular Vedanta, vedanta has become more of Pop Vedanta.That is not the way it should be done. Because, slowly people will start getting wrong notions about Vedanta. The philosophy itself will be damaged. Vedanta requires rigours. First of all Vedanta demands you come out of, at least you have a semblance of coming out of the sense of duality. Otherwise you cannot grasp these ideas. For such persons Bhakti is good enough. For such persons, Ramanuja's qualified monism or non-dualism is good enough. Nothing wrong with that.

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धर्मा य इति जायन्ते जायन्ते ते न तत्त्वतः ।

जन्म मायोपमं तेषां सा च माया न विद्यते ॥Karika 58॥

Those Jivas (entities) or beings are said to be born. But that birth which is never possible from the standpoint of Reality. Their birth is like that of an illusory object. That illusion again, is non-existent

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Here comes the finest definition of Maya. **सा च माया न विद्यते** - Sacha Maya na Viddate. When we talk about souls, when we talk about myself, yourself, when we talk about birth, when we talk about creation, we talk about beings getting born, we talk from the realm of Maya.

For example, Christian theology says that God created this world, God created beings and he breathed spirit. That makes each soul real. So the soul is real.

But not so in Vedanta. Birth is ascribed to the Jivas. We say that so and so is born, and we also believe that this Jivatma, there is soul in it. But such birth is not possible from the standpoint of absolute. How can infinite be born? Their birth is like that of an illusory object. Birth itself is an illusion. That illusion again does not exist.

That whatever is there, whatever we see in this world, it is all a product of Maya. And Maya itself does not exist - **सा च माया न विद्यते** - Such illusion is non-existent - Maya is non-existent. Whatever is there is because of the duality we see. Birth and death, happiness and misery Good and bad whatever is there it all because of Maya. And yet that Maya does not exist. We can say it is frightening. . Whenever we are talking about soul getting born, whenever we are talking about creation of the world, creation of the universe, these all find their spread, these all find their extension because of Maya. In reality there is no creation, neither the world, nor matter, nor objects, not even of the soul. What is there ? It is all a play of Maya. What is that Maya? **सा च माया न विद्यते** that Maya itself does not exist. Because, the moment you accept this world, these souls to be real, true, then Maya also becomes real. If

Maya becomes real, then Maya is no more Maya. It becomes Prakriti. Then it becomes Yog philosophy , Samkhya philosophy, and thousands of other dualistic philosophies.
Come verse no 59

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यथा मायामयाद्बीजाज्जायते तन्मयोऽङ्कुरः ।
नासौ नित्यो न चोच्छ्येदी तद्वद्धर्मेषु योजना ॥ Karika 59॥

The illusory sprout comes forth from the illusory seed. This illusory sprout is neither permanent nor destructible.The same applies to Jivas.

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It says that magicians could make some seeds magically sprout. I have read books where some magician planted one mango seed, covered it with a basket. Lifted the basket and there was a sapling, then covered it again. Lifted that there was a small tree and there was mango fruit and he distributed it. I read it in some authentic book. In fact there are some very good books related to the tradition of magic in India. There was one book named Jadu wallas, there is another book Net of Indra, So, I read them and I found that they do not discuss how they perform it but that these things were performed there is no doubt about that, including the famous rope trick. In that rope trick the magician throws a rope up. ‘ Nowadays they use elaborate mechanisms, sometimes some kind of illusion, for example there was this famous magician P C Sorcar. Now they play magic, they show us magic in different ways through different tricks. This is not any kind of hypnotism, but some kind of illusion is created.

The Karika says think of a seed that gives birth to an illusory sprout . The example that I gave you, is born of illusory seed. And this illusory sprout is neither permanent nor destructible. And the same applies to the Jivas. See Sprout is illusory. So can you say that that sprout was born? Can you say that it was destroyed? No, you cannot. It is meaningless to say. Why? These things have been discussed earlier and more examples will come. I was reading a very beautiful book on Magic and there was the description where some British guest had come and he was sitting with some Raja, and the Indian rope trick was being performed. The assistant of the magician went up the rope and then a head fell, and leg fell and this gentleman was startled. It is a recorded incident.Then that Indian Raja calmed him down and said, don't you worry. Nothing will happen. No rope has gone up, no head is falling. Nothing. Just calm down. And whose head had fallen, whose legs had fallen, after sometimes it was seen that he was coming out of the audience. We don't know how exactly they performed these illusions. But yes these illusions were elaborate. On to verse no 60

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नाजेषु सर्वधर्मेषु शाश्वताशाश्वताभिधा ।
यत्र वर्णा न वर्तन्ते विवेकस्तत्र नोच्यते ॥Karika 60॥

The epithets of permanence or impermanence cannot be applied to unborn Jiva. That which is indestructible by words cannot be discriminated (as real or unreal)

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Terms like permanent and impermanent these cannot be applied to the birthless Jivas. Soul, Atman, it is one with Brahman. So whether they are permanent or impermanent we cannot say that. Very often we say that Atman is permanent and this world is impermanent. You cannot use these words. Actually these are used to impress certain ideas in our mind. Atman is not permanent in the sense we understand permanent and temporary. No they are not. They alone exist. What is indescribable in words cannot be discriminated about as permanent or impermanent. If you go through the Upanishads, they repeatedly talk about that indescribable nature of Atman. Why? To describe something, to use a word, to use a name for some objects, first you have to form a mental idea. To form a mental idea, the mind must be able to grasp it. The mind is limited, Atman is infinite. How can the mind grasp something which is infinite? You cannot put five kg rice in a 1 kg bag. Similarly, the mind cannot grasp Atman. Maybe it can touch, it can see it was there,but beyond that you cannot. Atman cannot be grasped by mind. So how can it be described by words? And If cannot be described by words, How can you say that it is permanent, or not permanent etc.? It is meaningless. Why? Because the scriptures have said so. Should we be blind followers? Not at all. The discussion that has been going on, that has been going on for absolutely logical basis. After a time, the logic stops and then you say that okay fine. These are the words of the masters. But if you ask me, ultimately it is your mental orientation. Try however you may, if you are quite emotional, you will end up being a devotee of God. So for you it is Dualism in this form or that form. If your mind is constructed on different patterns, which actually means that you have been doing Sadhana on a particular line for many births, Advaita will attract you. Just this much. So you cannot say that Atman is Nitya, Atman is anitya, Atman is permanent, semi permanent, you cannot use these expressions. It is meaningless. So how can you ask, what is beyond mind?. How can you know what is beyond mind? Because to know what is beyond mind, mind has to be there, and you are saying what is beyond mind.

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यथा स्वप्ने द्वयाभासं चित्तं चलति माययाा ।
तथा जाग्रदद्वयाभासं चित्तं चलति माययाा ॥ Karika 61॥

अद्वयं च द्वयाभासं चित्तं स्वप्ने न संशयः ।
अद्वयं च द्वयाभासं तथा जाग्रन्न संशयम् ॥ Karika 62॥

As in dream, the mind is seen to act through Maya manifesting the appearance of duality, so also in the waking state the mind is seen to act, thorough Maya, producing the appearance of duality.

There is no doubt that the mind which is, in fact, non-dual, appear as dual in dream; in the like manner, undoubtedly, the waking state, which is non-dual, appear as dual

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As in dreams the mind acts through Maya, some is the case with waking state. In the dream state, the mind creates a lot of objects. It acts through Maya because the object and the ideas and the emotions that appear in your mind during a dream, are all real to you when you are in dream. Your dream body gets satiated when you eat well in a dream. Your thirst gets fulfilled when you drink. But it is all product of Maya. Thus presenting the appearance of duality. So also in the waking state the mind acts through Maya. In the dream state it is Maya that creates objects. It is Maya through the mind. Actually, mind and Maya are the same. The same happens in the waking state. The problem with us is that we consider the dream state to be inferior to the waking state, which is not a fact. Actually the waking state and dream state are absolutely the same from the standpoint of this supreme reality. They are both real. They are products of mind. The objects are products of mind, we have discussed it earlier. So there is no doubt that the mind which is in reality non-dual, Atman appears to be dual in dreams. You are one. You alone are one. When you are dreaming, when you are sleeping, you are one. Yet now you appear as many. In the waking state the same thing happens. You alone exist. And yet you appear as many. It is you who appears as many. Actually the mind is non-different from Atman. Absolutely there is no difference. Because when the agitation of mind stops it becomes one with Atman. If you don't wake up, if you become one with Atman, actually it is Atman. Yet it appears fragments and because it appears it presents reality as fragmented before us. And because of that the non-dual appears as dual. The only way is the little gateway, the little that is left. If you try to analyse the dream state you will realise how you have become many.

Well so we are trying to reach a conclusion through analogy. Analogy is given just to make us understand all the discussions that were there earlier. The mind which in reality is non-dual, appears to be dual in dreams, likewise there is no doubt that what is non-dual, that is Atman, appears to be dual in waking state as well. In the waking state, if you ask me what Maya is, I will say, to think that the waking state is real. That is the best example of the best definition of Maya. To think that the waking state is real. Nothing else. We consider God to be unreal, we consider dream to be real, and we consider our waking state to be real. Two unreals and in between there is one real. So we think that our mind is manufacturing God, our mind manufacturing dreams and I am the real. But it is not so.. You have to go one step further. As Atman you are real, as waking state you are unreal, as dream you are unreal.

56. Living in the fake world

We have already seen in verse no 62 how dream objects and the mind are one and the same. When you dream you see you have gone to places, did so many things, and seen so many things. But when you get up you realise you are where you were. This only shows that the objects that were in the mind are one with mind. It is the mind which created all those objects, it is the mind in which all those objects merged. And when you analyse further, you realise that neither there was any birth nor there was any death. And if the mind becomes the object of perception during a dream, it has to be the object of perception even when we are awake. Because after all it is the same mind.

When we study Raja Yog (and we have our Raja Yog talks on Youtube, you can listen to them) we find that when there is an object, the object sends a certain sensation which we grasp through our five senses. And when these sensations travelling through our nerve currents reach the mind / brain, the brain centers get activated. And they throw a reaction. That reaction is my knowledge, that reaction is my world. Well, this is how Raja Yog explains.

Advaita Vedanta goes one step farther and says that there are no objects that create sensation. It is your mind that creates sensations. And that is why we have named the discussion as “The fake world”. The world that is all around us, that itself and its object, they all appear to be so real, so powerful and yet they don't exist. In the Vedanta school of thought it is Sachchidananda that alone exists.

According to Acharya Shankar, if everything is destroyed, the idea of existence cannot be destroyed, which we have discussed many times. That is Sat. and we know what exists. You cannot know something that does not exist, and then there being no two, the Sat itself exists. And oversimplifying it, you derive pleasure from what you know, what exists. This is Ananda. So the ultimate truth is Sachchidananda. However, Vishistadvaita does not agree to this. Greats like Ramanuja do not agree. They say that Sachchidananda are the qualities of God. How do you reconcile? Either you have to say that Shankaracharya is wrong or you have to say that Ramanuja is wrong. Actually no one is wrong. It is about how you look at it. Those of you who have some idea about particle physics, fundamentals of physics, know that Newton proved conclusively that light is made up of stream of particles called corpuscles. They are particles, bullet like, yet a certain phenomenon could not be explained. And then there were some scientists who thought that light is a wave. Then came the great physicist Louis de Broglie. He showed how light is both a wave and a particle. I find this idea extremely fascinating. Like waves have certain highs and certain lows, depending how those highs are focussed they behave like particles, and how less, they behave like waves. Now, what is interesting is that, it was shown and now it is well known that depending on how you set up your experiment you see whether it is waves or particles. If you want to see light as

particles, you have set your experiment like that. And if you want to see it as waves you have to set up your experiment like that.

Now I am not one of those who will try to prove Advaita Vedanta with the help of Physics. It is just an example to give an idea, what exactly happens. Something similar happens in the case of Atman. Atman is both formless and it is also with form. when it is formless, it is Sachchidananda as mentioned. Atman says that I am one, I will appear as many. We don't know why exactly it happens. Acharya Shankar explained earlier that Shakti, a power of God, is always with God and Atman in that state is known as Brahman. The idea of Brahman and Shakti appearing separate has given rise to many different philosophies in India, particularly Shakti worshippers and those who belong to Tantra school of thoughts. Thoughts is not the right word to use, but I am using it just for convenience. Now that same Sachchidananda (existence, knowledge, bliss) that is pure consciousness now appears as God with form. That which was formless now appears as God with form because canvas has come. If you throw light you cannot know if light is there. You need to have some kind of canvas. For example if you are walking through darkness and switch on a torch, you can see the light because there is some kind of screen, the dust particles, there are other objects. When light falls on those things they get lit up and that is how you see things. The screen now gets lit up. Shakti now gets lit up. And God now appears as God with qualities. To say that there will be Nirguna Skaar, this will be God with form but with no qualities is not possible. Theoretically speaking you can have nirakar with Guna but you can never have sakaar with no Guna. Because it is the essential trait. The moment there is creation, God will now appear as having qualities. But actually God has only three qualities - Sat, Chit & Ananda and this Sachchidananda when they combine with each other give rise to literally infinite number of qualities. And that is what Ramanuja says by nirguna; our scriptures mean so many qualities that cannot be qualified. Well that is what he thinks. Perfectly alright with us.

When we come to our level that is what is interesting and Mandulya Karika is discussing that. In Brihadaranyaka Upanishad there is the story of Rishi Yagyavalka. Yagyavalka tells his wife, any love, any affection is because the person sees his own self in that. If you combine these two things something very interesting comes up. I have not read it anywhere but I know this to be true. It must be somewhere. Our scriptures are so vast that whatever you think, you will see that it is already written down is some scripture. Because of the differentiation between Sat, Chit, Ananda - existence, knowledge and bliss, at the level of Shakti, appears as cosmic mind and is also known as Prakriti. Prakriti or Shakti is that dividing line and the whole thing lit up is the cosmic mind. It is the cosmic mind that evolves. Whatever we see, I am seeing this microphone, what is this? Actually it is just a part of the cosmic mind. It is not an object.

Coming to our personal relation, suppose you are before me, I judge you in a particular way. I judge you actually at three levels. Your body, your mind and your appearance. Because of the body, body means it is you, once you die the body will be gone, it is the Sat aspect of Brahman appearing before me in you the body. Body represents Sat. When you love somebody, for example there is a mom, who loves her newborn baby, unknown to her understanding she is loving God, but in the aspect of Sat i.e., existence. Because the body is nothing but a concrete manifestation of existence.

Now the mind has various qualities. Your mind is one kind, my mind is of a different kind. Very often people say that oh! I am so different. I have heard it from so many people. I am so different. Actually I am different and many will say that people don't even understand me. They don't try to understand me, I am so different etc..

Yes, everyone is different. If you take the sumtotal of the qualities of a person, that is his aura or personality. But essentially what is that? It is Chit. Consciousness manifesting as mental qualities, mental traits.

And there is a sense of beauty in that person. From the time of Plato, we have been going by this beauty and qualities. Poor Greek philosophers if only they had tried to interact with the Indians, they would have known that all these discussions about beauty and quality are actually so simple for us. Sachchidananda,now appears as quality and Ananda is now Beauty. You love someone. Why do you love that person? Because you are attracted by the beauty of that person, minus the Sat and chit. You are affectionate to some people. Why? You love that Ananda part. Well who loved? You. Who is this you? The same Satchidananda who is appearing within you as the body, as the mind and as love. And that is why sometimes the aspect of love is put to heart which is not true. Whenever you get attracted towards somebody, remember that actually you are loving God. God who is personified as body, who is personified as the mind.

When one loves somebody they would say that she is so spiritual.whenever you love somebody the first thing that comes to your mind is that person is so spiritual. By “spiritual”, God knows what these western people mean. Totally confused. Very often these people come to India, they travel around for six weeks or six months with a backpack, go back and start an ashram or something like teaching practical Yog, travelling Yog and wandering Yog , meandering Yog and all that.

But things go deeper. When you love someone, it is loving the physical manifestation of God in the body. Physical manifestation of God, the Chit, Physical manifestation of Ananda. If that person loves you, that love basically is Ananda. So whether that person is spiritual in the western term or beautiful or with a great mind, whatever it is, unknown to you, you are loving God. If only you drop the personification, if only you stop looking for that thing, whose personification is this body, you will be with God. There is God the absolute and there is the

mask on that absolute, you are living that mask, mask in the form of this person, that person. Remove that mask and you will be loving God. Now what is this mask? This is what is being discussed in Mandukya Karika that this mask is false.

To look back, the absolute, God the absolute, will now appear as multi. The whole thing is a thought and then appears that dividing line that separates the absolute from time, space, causation. But then time space causation does not have any reality of its own.They are not real in the sense that God is real. This is what Mandulya Karika is trying to tell us. Now if you think that Atman alone has become all this, perfectly alright, nothing wrong with it. But remember that Atman, by its very definition, is infinite. When you worship the beauty of a particular person, you are limiting that Atman. A limited Atman is no Atman. When Sri Ramakrishna saw that all those utensils, during worship all were conscious. Basically it was an ocean of consciousness, in which that was also conscious. When Sri Ramakrishna touched Swami Vivekananda he had a similar experience. And he found that even the food that he was taking, it was all conscious. Everything was an ocean of consciousness. Well this is what Mandukya Karika is saying. On to verse 63.

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स्वप्नदृक् प्रचरन स्वप्ने दिक्षु वै दशसु स्थितान् ।

अण्डजान् स्वेदजान्वाऽपि जीवान् पश्यति यान्सदा ॥Karika 63॥

The whole variety of Jivas, born of eggs, moisture, etc.,always seen by the dreamer when he goes about (in his dream) in all ten directions (have no existence apart from the mind of the dreamer)

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When you are sleeping you dream and in that dream you have been moving in all ten directions and you are seeing things of different types. Here the term is **अण्डजान्** - Andajan, Anadaj - means things born of eggs. According to our Indian tradition they say that there are four types of beings. First are known as Udvija, the plants etc,, the second one are known as Shwedaja , those born of sweat, things like lice and all. Well they thought that those things that live in humid places are born of sweat. They were wrong in that, because now we know that eggs are planted there. So no use justifying it. If they were wrong, they were wrong. And the third one Andaja - things born of eggs. And Jarayuja - born of wombs. It is just categorisation and has no impact on overall philosophy. Tomorrow if we come across clones, it makes no difference to our philosophy.

The verse says that the dreamer, wandering about in all the ten directions in his dream, sees the whole variety of Jivas born of eggs, moisture etc. Andaja, swedaja; meaning that dreamer sees the entire gamut of creation, the entire gamut of beings in the dreams and yet knows that one never went anywhere. Nothing was created, nothing died, nothing existed. Yet there was experience. So what are those things? Nothing is different from the mind of

the dreamer. It is the dreamer who is perceiving his own mind. Nothing else, nothing else to perceive.

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स्वप्नदृक्चित्तदृश्यास्ते न विद्यन्ते ततः पृथक् ।

तथा तद्दृश्यमेवेदं स्वप्नदृक्चित्तमिष्यते ॥Karika 64॥

These (beings) which are objects of the mind of the dreamer have no existence apart from his mind. Similarly, this mind of the dreamer is admitted to be the object of perception of the dreamer only. (Therefore the mind of the dreamer is not separate from the dreamer himself)

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These entities of the object of the mind of the Jivas do not exist apart from his mind. All these things that you see, whatever kind of being you might see, actually those beings are non-different from your mind. Likewise, the mind of the dreamer is an object of perception of the dreamer alone.For example, two brothers, two friends are sleeping side by side, one person's dreams of something, another one dreams of something entirely different. That shows that objects experienced by one person are different from objects perceived by another person. And that being seen by the minds, it is very clear that the minds of two persons are different. That means everybody perceives their own mind and each has his own mind and perception of the mind are separate. Your mind is your mind, my mind is my mind. Essentially what it means to say is that the dream objects are one with the dream. This is something we need to understand. So, that is the reason why one perceives one's mind. So we very clearly perceive our mind during our dreams.

If you analyse, you are becoming conscious of your own soul. Because when this idea becomes absolutely clear that I am watching my mind, when you wake up, you look back and you see that you only were looking at your mind. In the waking state it is also mixed up that we cannot say that we know our Jivatma, our souls, ourselves. And this is what we have to try consciously during meditation. When you are meditating on your Ishta, on your God, one of the first things that you experience is your own soul. Your Atman which is inside you. And when you perceive that, when you see that, then you perceive your Ishta, on whom you have been meditating as living being, as Jyotirmaya, surrounded by divine light, That divine light is Atman. You actually see it. It is not imagination. So, there you see Atman differently and in dreams you see Atman differently. But under normal waking conditions, we cannot experience Atman. It is a very sad thing. And, this subject object duality that we experience in our waking state, is what differentiates one mind from another mind. When you have this subject object duality, it is the empirical mind, the mind with which we work and when this subject object duality vanishes, it is the state of Atman. A slight hint of that we get is during dreams. That is why people who have extremely lucid dreams, those who remember their dreams well, it is very easy for them to dissociate themselves from the external world. Because then you can think that whatever I was dreaming, all the things I dreamt these are

essentially all mind. And the same mind that continues in the waking state. So, everything that I am seeing in this waking state, the world that I am seeing is all fake. Why is it fake? Because all the objects that I see in this external world, are actually my mind, nothing else. Actually it is so. Well, discussions were in the past and we will continue that discussion. That verse 64 says nothing exists other than the dreamer. There is the dreamer in whatever way he is dreaming, there is no object nothing. And yet everything has been created. And then comes verse no 65 and 66, that links up.

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चरत् जागरिते जाग्रद्दिक्षु वै दशसु स्थितान् ।
अण्डजान्स्वेदजान्वाऽपि जीवान्पश्यति यान्सदा ॥Karika 65॥

जाग्रच्चितेक्षणीयास्ते न विद्यन्ते ततः पृथक् ।
तथा तद्दृश्यमेवेदं जाग्रतश्चित्तमिष्यते ॥Karika 66॥

The whole variety of Jivas, born of eggs, moisture etc., always seen by the waking man when he goes about (in his waking condition) in all ten directions, is only the object of the mind of the waking man. These Jivas are in no way apart from the waking mind. Similarly, the mind of the waking man is admitted to be the object of perception of the waking person only. (Therefore the mind is not separate from the perceiver.)

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The way objects are created in the dream, the way the objects are experienced in the dream, just like that we experience in the waking state too. Why should we say that the mind of the waking state is different from the mind of the dream state? After all it is the same mind. Your son, you mischievous son, he is the same as your adorable son. You cannot say that my adorable son is someone and my mischievous son is someone else. No. They are one and the same. Sometimes he indulges in some kind of acts and at other times he is indulging in some other kind of acts. It is the same mind which during the dream state creates the objects, experiences them, finds pleasure, gets terrified and fights. If you have anger against somebody , sometimes you will see that in dream and you will find that you are shouting at that person etc., because we take it out , we create that person in dream and we work out our emotions. That is exactly what happens in the waking state too. You know, I am always appalled by modern civilization, in the sense that thousands of years ago, I think of our lives. We would have been born maybe in some kind of a tribe, thousands of years ago,and we would know only that small tribe, small world and the village we lived in and I assume for our convenience that we belonged to an agrarian society. So well, the world might have appeared real. But in today's world, just imagine the number of people we come across, things we experience. When you think of people you were with a year ago. It all seems like a dream. If you just apply your imagination a bit, you feel as if something happened in your dream. If any of you had an experience of a very nasty situation, for example, you were in some kind of accident, any life threatening situation, you will see that

details get erased and you create your own reality simply to survive. Because memories get altered, erased and reality gets fudged. Mind doesn't want to face those disastrous realities. But moments of love, those good moments in life, we cherish them. And they come to us in ever larger size, in ever larger proportions, because Atman loves Atman. Atman being Sachchidananda, it wants to experience only Ananda. It does not want to experience any misery. It wants to forget misery, It wants to forget the different situations and different incidents, accidents through which we pass. You want to dwell on goodness, because goodness is our nature. Evil is not our nature. A corollary of this is to always try to look at the good aspects of a person, because that is that person's nature and that is your nature.

So verse 65 and 66 says, the waking man wandering about in all directions, just like the dream, in his waking state sees the whole varieties of Jiva, born of eggs moisture etc. and they are the objects of the mind of the waking man. And they do not exist. They are the objects of the mind of the waking man and do not exist apart from the mind.

We have discussed this so many times, so we don't need to elaborate. Likewise the mind of the waking man is an object of his perception alone. His mind is not the perceiver, Atman is the perceiver of the mind. Mind and the objects that we so called perceive in the dream state and that appear in the waking state are one and the same. So, it is like producing clay dolls. Take up some clay and create different idols, different dolls, whatever. What are they? They are just dolls. The objects, whether it be, objects that have been the dream state or the waking state, are not different from the mind and the mind is perceived by the Atman. So the mind has no reality apart from Atman. Objects do not have any reality apart from the mind. Are we ready to accept all that? No we are not. That is why Upanishads were taught to limited people and Mandukya Upanishad is meant for even a lesser number of people.

Verse no 67 says

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उभे ह्यन्योन्यदृश्ये ते किं तदस्तीति नोच्यते ।

लक्षणाशून्यमुभयं तन्मतेनैव गृह्यते ॥ Karika 67॥

Both (the mind and the Jiva) are objects of perception to each other. Which then can be said to exist independent of the other? (the reply of the wise is in the negative). Both are devoid of the marks by which they could be distinguished. For either can be cognized only through the other.

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This verse is very interesting. Both the mind and the Jivas are objects of each other's perceptions. Can Jiva and mind exist independent of each other? The reply of the wise is in the negative. There is no evidence of the existence of the one without the other. They are cognised only through each other. Now, during the dream state, when you are seeing objects, you realise the objects and the mind are one and the same. So they do not have any separate existence. That has been discussed already. But as far as philosophies are concerned, particularly in the western philosophy, there are the idealists and the realists.

According to idealists, it is the mind that perceives objects. And for the realists, objects create the mind and it is the objects that are perceived by the mind. But according to Mandukya both of them are wrong. Neither the idealists are correct, nor the realists are correct. Why? Says that perception and the perceived objects they create each other. For example, think of some object, the example used here is an elephant. There is an elephant, a dream elephant and dream elephant is one and the same as the mind. But the same happens in the waking state too. To see an elephant, and this elephant is actually non-different from mind. The awareness part within is the same. The mind and elephant are non-different. For example here is this microphone, Its existence is creating its awareness and because there is an awareness, its existence is being created. Idealists and realists exactly quarrel at this point.

You have the knowledge of something and because you have the knowledge of that, you get the knowledge of its existence. You have to know the object, and that is how you know the existence. And because the object exists, that is why you know it. So knowledge and existence are codependent. Without knowledge there cannot be existence and without existence, there cannot be any knowledge.

So, exactly what happens is that the object of knowledge and the instrument of Knowledge are essentially one. I don't know if you got the argument. It is very simple. The argument is actually simple. Here is this pen as an existence. Because it has an existence I know it and because I have knowledge of this pen, that is why it exists for me. If I don't know this pen, for example sometimes when we are not mindful, you are travelling by a bus, through a crowded street, you are not mindful of so many faces, all the things that we cross, so they don't exist for me. In earlier times, rich people did not care for the poor. So the poor did not exist. They were a solid mass. Basically they were not even aware of their existence. That is what happens even today. The bottom line of this argument is that they are just instruments of knowledge, be it sense organs with nerve currents, whatever you call, ultimately the whole thing boils down to mind. So this instrument of knowledge and the object of knowledge are one and the same. The dream elephant and the mind are one and the same. In the waking state too, when we see and object we become aware of it. We become aware of its existence and if it exists we know that it exists. So, knowledge and existence, that is the instrument of knowledge and the object of knowledge, they are one and the same. Yet they appear as separate. When you go onto Samadhi these three merge into one. The knower, the knowable and instrument of knowledge merge into one. And then you realise that it was Atman all along which appeared as objects , which appeared as the instrument of knowledge, which is the mind or the process of knowledge. See in any way, actually they were one and the same. Yet, in this world they appear as subject, object and the process that links subject with the object. In Samadhi, in a state of knowledge they all merge into

one. There is no duality. That is what is said in verse no 67. **उभे ह्यन्योन्यदृश्ये ते किं तदस्तीति नोच्यते** - that two things one who knows and one who is known and this process of knowledge, are one and the same because they have no separate existence. What do we see? They will use the term Tatchittata. Absorption. We had explained earlier how awareness increases eminence. Awareness is absorption. You get absorbed in something and it becomes real. We have been taught since our childhood, since we were babies, our parents, our neighbours, our teachers all taught us the reality of this world. For example, I have never seen a rocket, I have never been to the moon, I have not seen an atom, I have not seen an atomic explosion, yet I believe. Why? Not because science books say that. But because we believe in the people who teach us. And by being with that knowledge for a very long time we acquire Tatchittata, our mind becomes one with that object. And those things become real for us. Does that change anything for us? For a scientist nothing changes. He continues to be what he was. But for a spiritual person everything changes. When a spiritual person gets absorbed in say meditation, meditation on Atman, meditation on God, ultimately everything changes. Initially the process is the same, you keep on thinking on your Ishta, your chosen deity for so long when your mind gets absorbed and because your mind gets absorbed the reality becomes more and more clear. And then you suddenly realise that the reality of subject, object and the verb, this does not exist. This is what is being said. So, it has been a long discussion and then things become extremely simple in the next three verses.

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यथा स्वप्नमयो जीवो जायते म्रियतेऽपि च ।
तथा जीवा अमी सर्वे भवन्ति न भवन्ति च ॥ Karika 68॥

यथा मायामयो जीवो जायते म्रियतेऽपि च ।
तथा जीवा अमी सर्वे भवन्ति न भवन्ति च ॥ Karika 69॥

यथा निर्मितको जीवो जायते म्रियतेऽपि वा ।
तथा जीवा अमी सर्वे भवन्ति न भवन्ति च ॥Karika 70॥

As the dream-Jiva comes into being and disappears, so also all Jivas (perceived in the waking condition) appear and disappear.

As the magician's Jiva comes into being and passes away, so also the Jivas (perceived in the waking condition) appear and disappear.

As the artificial Jiva (brought into existence by incantation, medicinal herb etc.) comes into being and passes away, so also all the Jivas (perceived in the waking condition) appear and disappear.

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The way the objects of the dream are born and die, and yet neither they are born, nor do they die. Just like that all these beings neither they are born, nor they die. It is all creation of the mind. It is frightening.

As a dream-Jiva comes into existence and disappears, so also the Jivas perceived in the waking state appear and disappear. And as the Jivas conjured up by the magician come into existence and disappear, so also the Jivas, perceived in the waking state appear and disappear.

The first was about dreams, the second was about magicians. Magicians also create beings. Which appear and disappear. Actually nothing changes. Karika 70 says that sometimes objects are created by the power of the Mantra. It is believed, maybe they are created. So also these are neither born nor do they die. Just like that the Jivas in this real world are neither born, nor die. The idea is that all these categorizations of different kinds of species and all these discussions about thousands of things including science, are all products of mind. Now this philosophy is so exalted, so exalted that the critics of Gaudapada and critics of Advaita Vedanta, called him Prachchhanna Buddhist. Sounds like VijnanaVada, ShunyaVada, but it is not. It is BrahmaVada. The fundamental difference between Buddhism and Vedanta is that Vedanta is BrahmaVada, Atman alone exists, and Atman alone appears as all these things. We had begun with how Atman appears in this relative world as Sachchidananda, body, mind and love. Essentially whatever you are experiencing, whatever your emotions are, all are Atman, nothing outside Atman. The world as we understand, the world as we think, is fake. It is just fake.

57. Birth & Rebirth is caused by Ignorance

Mandukya Karika already showed that if the dream objects are unreal, then the objects of the living world have to be unreal.

The important thing to remember is that Gaudapada, in the Mandukya Karika, puts before us all the arguments coming from the scriptures, and all the arguments that we can make to prove that everything is unborn. There is no birth, no death.

Gaudapada is now summing up things and propounding the truth according to Advaita Vedanta. Now one important thing that I would like to mention here is that although there are many schools of Advaita Vedanta like Shuddha Advaita, Vishishta Advaita etc., in reality there is only one thing and that is Advaita.

BBefore we proceed, there are two important points to discuss. The first one is that when you take just one aspect of Advaita Vedanta, you propose something, and that does not change Advaita. Advaita remains Advaita. So, putting some kind of adjective is meaningless. Because what they present as Shuddha Advaita is there in Advaita itself. And what they present as Vishishta Advaita that is also there in Advaita itself. What they present as Dvaita that is also there in the Advaita. Now one of our brother monks has started a new VijnanaVedanta. Now that is also in Advaita. Advaita is the whole. When you take up something it is already there. Why give it a new name? Now if you say that is only true, that point is also discussed in the Karika. Karika says that some people have such persistence that they don't want to change. This will be discussed here. So this is one important thing. Advaita is the whole and our Gaudapada he has even summed up, he is kind of reiterating the facts.

Second thing is that everytime you come up with philosophy, when you say that, this is my worldview (philosophy is actually worldview). Although if you go etymologically word for word, it means knowledge. But actually it is worldview. Philosophy gives you a worldview. Now when you come up with a new philosophy you have to explain the prevailing beliefs. Suppose, you are born in Europe. European people have certain beliefs regarding God, regarding the individual, regarding society, regarding the market. You have to explain all those things. When you come to India, and when you want to give a new worldview, you will have to explain the things that we already know or things in which we have firm belief, firm faith. One of them is God. You have to explain what God is. The second common belief which even a kid knows is the mind. What is mind? And how we are born. In India the additional question is how do you look at rebirth? How do you look at death? How do you look at heaven and hell? All these things you have to explain. Now, Karika says there is no birth. Consequently there is no death. But Karika will have to explain all these. And this is what our Gaudapada is now doing.

Having established AjataVada, the philosophy of non-birth, our Gaudapada is now explaining all these. So, things will now be very difficult. In case you think that you are not accepting a particular view that Gaudapada gives, then you have to listen from the very beginning, because he has countered every possible objection. With that we come down to verse no 71

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न कश्चिज्जायते जीवः सम्भवोऽस्य न विद्यते ।

एतत्तदुत्तमं सत्यं यत्र किंचिन्न जायते ॥Karika 71॥

No kind of JIva is ever born nor is there any cause for any such birth, The Ultimate Truth is that nothing whatsoever is born

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No Jiva comes into existence. There exists no cause that can produce it.The supreme truth is that nothing ever is born. Advaita says that the idea of “I” associated with a particular body and mind as being real, is false. In case you are truly interested in understanding Advaita, Advaita does not say that the world is false. Advaita does not say that the mind is false. And most importantly Advaita never says that God is false. It never says God is false. The most important thing to be contradicted in Advaita is that the sense of “I” is false. In case you are truly interested in Advaita, you have to know that Advaita only says that the idea that “I” is a reality. But the idea that, because it is real, it will have to be born, and it will die, this is false. If you look at different systems of say Yog, say Karma Yoga, Jnana Yog, Bhakti Yog, Raja Yog, actually all these Yogs, preach you exactly the same thing - annihilation of “I”,.Those who have read the Gospel of Sri Ramakrishna thoroughly, you will find that Sri Ramakrishna repeatedly talks about false “I”, ripe “I” (Kancha Ami, Paka Ami).

When you think of Swami Samarpananda, who is delivering these talks, this is the unripe “I”. And there is a ripe “I” corresponding to it. And it is Brahman. In Bhakti, this Brahman is now God. Is there any difference? No, there is no difference. That which is Brahman, is God. The problem with us is, that we superimpose certain ideas from our mind on Brahman, on God, and then we start perceiving God as this and that. This happens in every religion. Now if you look at other religions, the same thing happens.

Christians say that after the judgement day, you will be judged and God will accept you through the intervention of Jesus. We may question all these beliefs because, why should an all knowing God, need some kind of intervention, some kind of advocacy. Why should Jesus advocate your case, present your case? God knows everything and not only that, those who took the path of evil God knows about them as well. We can question all these and in fact Christianity and all dualistic religions stumble at this point. Actually they have no answer. And philosophically they are not sound.

However the ultimate spiritual truth that they propose or propound that is absolutely correct. What is that? Being one with God. The idea of purgatory, where you are purified, you are purified of what? You are purified of “I”ness, the unripe “I”. When you purchase something, you throw away the packaging and keep the thing you bought. The idea of unripe ego, unripe “I”, is just this. You are put through some Karma, you are put through heaven and hell, you are put in purgatory so that all this is burned down. Now when you are in this world, the world about which we know so well, we are so aware of this world, it is easy for us to work out. Why wait for some purgatory? Why wait for some hell?

This is where Hinduism differs from other religions. If you take this particular point, and you see all the religions and the different paths of religion, they are talking about the same thing. Burning down the unripe ego to make you full and complete, to make your

ego the ripe ego, the ripe "I". There is no more ego in the sense that we understand, when we are with God. You may wonder what about Christianity where they say that the individual enters the Kingdom of Heaven, now what happens after that? Your individuality merges with the individuality of God. Well, these things are a bit subtle to understand. Just keep in mind that the ultimate spiritual reality is to get rid of the unripe "I". By being spiritual means that you get over your unripe "I". The kancha ami (কাঁচা আমি) is destroyed. This is what the system of Yog says, this is what every religion says and this is what Mandukya Karika is also saying. Just that the way they define it is different and the way the path is laid out is slightly different. But ultimately the goal is the same.

So it says, **न कश्चिज्जायते जीवः सम्भवोऽस्य न विद्यते ।** – No JIva is ever born. How can Jiva be born? If you ask a question, you say it is sacrilege. You are going against my bible where God is described to be creating this universe and breathing life into that clay image. The problem is that because they have not really gone deep into spirituality and people who went that path, probably have not left much record. The way, the Hindus have explored the world of spirituality, no other society has done so. Some of these things are metaphorical, what we call in Hinduism Pouranic, belonging to the Puranas. These are actually spiritual stories, religious stories which they take to be true. You will find it very interesting that people of other religions and people of other beliefs, and those who call themselves liberals and rationalists, come and attack Hindu religion on their myths and mythologies which are religious stories. And when it comes to their own religious stories, they are silent. And try telling them a word, and they will have only one response. Off with his head. The Karika is saying **एतत्तदुत्तमं सत्यं** - Supreme truth. No Jiva is ever born. You are not born, I was not born, no one was born. We all appear to be born. So birth has been explained. What is birth? There is no birth the way we understand. Swamiji has explained Atman and Brahman as Atman is something whose presence is everywhere but the center is the body. For Brahman the center is everywhere. In the case of Atman, the center is the body. Beautiful words. Nowadays Physicists say that in this universe, in this Cosmos, the center is everywhere. But that does not make Universe God. But the idea becomes a little clearer. The center is everywhere. In the case of Atman, the center is the body. There cannot be a better explanation to this Atman and Brahman relationship. As Swamiji has said, Atman is everywhere but the center is the body. Brahman is everywhere, its center is everywhere. So, when a baby is born what exactly happens? Nothing happens. As the matter starts changing, you get the idea of birth and rebirth and all these things. Actually nothing

happens. It is just the movement of bubbles, formation of bubbles though it remains the same.

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चित्तस्पन्दितमेवेदं ग्राह्यग्राहकवद्द्वयम् ।

चित्तं निर्विषयं नित्यमसंगं तेन कीर्तितम् ॥Karika 72॥

This perceived world of duality, characterised by the subject-object relationship, is verily an act of the mind. The mind, again, (from the standpoint of reality) is without touch with any object (as it is of the nature of Atman). Hence it is declared to be eternal and unattached.

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The world of duality, the world in which we live which is perceived to exist and is characterised by the subject-object relationship, it is verily a movement of the mind. The mind again from the standpoint of reality has no contact with any object and hence it is declared to be eternal and unattached. Now this is a slightly difficult verse to understand. The discussion is here on the nature of mind. Those of you who have listened to some of the talks related to Hindu spirituality, Hindu philosophy would know that the mind is treated as matter. Very fine state of matter, Swamiji repeatedly talks about the mind as being material, matter. Samkhya takes this view, Yog takes this view and even Vedanta takes this view when Gita talks about higher truth and lower truth. God alone has become both. But when you go deeper, when you start thinking of the nature of mind, you realise that it is the mind that gives you the knowledge of this world. It is the mind that takes you into deep sleep. It is the mind that gives you your dreams. And it is this mind that becomes one with Brahman. And Sri Ramakrishna says pure mind, pure Atman, they are one. And this is what Mandukya Karika also says. Pure mind and Pure Atman are one and the same.

Now comes a paradox. If mind is grasping this world, if mind is able to grasp the matter, mind has to be material. Because unless there is some point of contact, the mind cannot grasp it. So contact can only be if mind is matter. Now the mind gives you the idea of God. When you go into Samadhi, you know God. This requires a spiritual mind. Even the prophets said that his mind has to be spiritual. How can something be spiritual and also be material? How can mind be both? So one of these two has to be false. What is the way to know the mind? If you start probing the nature of mind, if you try to understand what exactly the mind is, you will find this great paradox. Mind is material because it gives us knowledge of the world. It is spiritual because it gives us the knowledge of God, during Samadhi of course. We don't know what exactly happens in nirvikalpa Samadhi, but we have it from the words of Sri Ramakrishna that in that state pure mind and pure Atman become one. Then the mind cannot be material. Our mind cannot be such material which at times behaves as matter and some other times behaves as consciousness. Because it has to be one uniform thing. Do you know what the conclusion is? The conclusion is actually extreme. Either the truth is dialectical materialism as proposed by Marx, because idealists cannot have any truth.

Materialists cannot have truth. Simply if you take both aspects of mind, if you consider Sri Ramakrishna's words to be true and if you consider your own observations of this world to be true, then you will realise that either dialectical materialism is true, God being false or pure mind is one with pure Atman, the world is false, is true. There is no in between. This implies that philosophies which belong to materialistic schools of thought, which takes say, objectivism, empiricism, and Aristotle and such persons, are all wrong. And Idealism which includes persons like Kany, Hegel and Spinoza, are also wrong. Only Marx remains to be true, because Marx takes certain ideas from idealism, that is Hegel's ideas and dialectical materialism becomes ultimate truth, with God being false. Or AjataVada, our GaudaPada becomes the ultimate reality. There is no materialism. You don't have to know some rocket science. A very simple thing. When the mind is with the world, it gives us the knowledge of the objects. So it has to be material. And when in Samadhi, it gives us the knowledge of God. It has to be spiritual. At the same time it cannot be both. It simply means that one of them is false. So either you have to be a Marxist or you have to be a Vedantin, there is no other system. Absolutely no religion, absolutely no philosophy, no worldview can be true, simply if you focus on the nature of mind. I am no philosopher, I am not even a student of philosophy, so you might wonder how I can be so firm in my belief. And so convinced. Because ultimately every philosophy is born from simplicity, simple understanding. The more you make it scholarly, it only means that you are trying to hide behind words. You are trying to hide behind your emotions, your beliefs. When a mother sees her baby suffering she cannot speak much. Emotions are felt. And when a person comes and starts telling how much he admires you, how much he adores you and how divine you are and all these and somewhere emotions are hidden behind the words. It only means that you use too many words to hide something. Philosophy is the same. Truth is so simple. As for the mind it is knowing the objects. We all can see it everyday. As for pure mind being one with pure Atman we have the testimony of Sri Ramakrishna and Gaudapada, who has shown with the help of the scriptural statements and through arguments. Whether you want to accept it or not, that is your concern. Now Karl Marx had no faith in spirituality and so he said that religion is the opiate of society. But the fact remains, If we had to accept Marx, why should we not accept Sri Ramakrishna too? After all, Marx was just giving us a theory of economics. As for his understanding of the universe he was in no way superior to me or you or anyone. You all know two fundamental things - I exist and this world exists. I have to prey upon this world to survive. Otherwise the world will prey upon me to survive. This is such a simple thing.

Mandukya Karika has very clearly shown that there is no external object, they are a construct of the mind. If these objects had been real then there would be subject object duality. If this pen were to be a true object , a real object, then there would be subject-object

duality, there would be mind - object connection. But this pen itself does not exist. Why it does not exist was explained earlier. There is no subject object duality and since there is no subject object duality, reality has absolutely no contact with any object, because they don't exist. The very idea of subject object duality is a superimposition on us because of Ajnana. For some mysterious reason, from whatever reason, maybe God's will or whatever you say, we have forgotten our true nature. We have forgotten who we are. And because we have forgotten who we are, there are more and more superimpositions. And superimposition is when you mistake something for something else. The example used in Vedanta is that of snake and the rope. There is a rope and you think it is a water line or you think it is a snake. This is a superimposition. Because you do not know the true nature of the thing lying in front of you, which is a rope. And naturally that creates many more superimpositions. Because we are under ignorance, we are under ajnana, we keep on superimposing so many things and keep on superimposing on our soul, Atman. Because we are under ignorance, we keep on superimposing so many things and keep on superimposing on our soul, Atman. We keep on superimposing on our mind, we keep on superimposing on this world, on you, on my loved ones, on those whom I dislike. And worst of all these we superimpose our own emotions, our own weakness, our own strength on God. So God becomes a merciful God, because we want mercy from this world. And God becomes a just God because we want justice from this world. And God becomes a loving God, because you are dying for love. You will look for God, you will look for that Supreme Being who has the traits that are predominantly within you. If you are an extremely afraid person, you might see God as somebody who sends terror. Or who is so powerful; that he takes away your fear. This is a simple thing. So a God who has these traits (SaguNa) is a construct of the mind who suffers from certain disabilities or who has certain strength in the sense that there are certain traits which are superimposed on God, who is pure Atman, who is pure consciousness.

When you think that God is merciful, when you think that God will look after us, somewhere you are missing your Mother, mother who looks after you, you want God to look after you. You never want to grow up. You want God to look after you. What kind of person you are? So beggarly! Always begging!

There is no subject object Duality because the mind can never be in touch with the objects. Because those objects do not exist. And if there is no subject object Duality, what is the nature of mind? It has to be one with Atman, as Sri Ramakrishna said. Unfortunately for us, personally so far as I am concerned, even if Gaudapada had not given us these arguments, I would always think that mind is one with Atman, because it is so obvious. In fact, instead of coming up with this philosophy or that philosophy, someone should come up and write a book on the philosophy of Sri Ramakrishna explaining mind, explaining matter, explaining God. Because every philosophy has to explain three things, Ishwar and JIv and Jagat, that is

God, the individual and the world. There are only three things that need to be explained. And naturally the mind comes in between, because we perceive this world through mind, we perceive “I” through mind. So naturally the mind has to be explained. That would be the real philosophy which Gaudapada has done here. This is what our verse no 72 says

चित्तस्पन्दितमेवेदं ग्राह्यग्राहकवद्द्वयम् । - this world of duality which is perceived to exist and is characterised by subject object relationship, is verily a movement of the mind, a construct of the mind. It has no reality as such, This is what has been shown earlier. The mind again from the standpoint of reality has no contact with any object. It cannot have hence it is described to be eternal and unattached. Mind is eternal, mind is unattached. Just like Atman.

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योऽस्ति कल्पितसंवृत्या परमार्थेन नास्त्यसौ ।
परतन्त्राभिसंवृत्या स्यान्नास्ति परमार्थतः ॥ Karika 73॥

That which exists on the strength of the illusory experiences does not, really speaking, exist. That which, again, is said to exist on the strength of the views supported by the other schools of thought, does not, really speaking, exist.

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The very idea of subject-object duality is false knowledge. That mind is matter is based on false knowledge, based upon imagination that does not really exist. It is all imagination. It does not exist. If you are imagining water in a desert in a mirage, it is false knowledge. It does not exist. Again which is said to exist on the strength of the other views advanced by other schools of thoughts does not really exist. Again a very powerful statement from Karika. Something that is imagined, does not exist. Similarly is the case with the different schools of thoughts that we have. Gaudapada did not know of other religions, so he does not mention them. He only talks about different schools of philosophy that were written and says all these views advanced by the other schools of thoughts, they really do not exist. The idea being these are all False. Nowadays I am coming across a new term quite often - roasting - when you contradict the views of others very powerfully they call it roasting. Gaudapada does not roast, just blows them away like bubbles. You blow on a bubble, it bursts, and you realise that there was nothing, there is nothing and there would be nothing. So these scriptures belonging to dualistic schools of thought cannot be ultimately real. Indeed a very strong statement. Now, I am too ordinary a person to say that Ramanuja was wrong, and Madhwa was wrong, because they had their arguments, they had their views. But it is just a simple argument. If matters do not exist, how can you have a theory of materialists? Karika has shown very clearly that there is no independent existence of matter. How can you have philosophy based on materialism? Mandukya Karika has very clearly shown that there is no independent existence of mind, other than consciousness. How can you have theories of idealism? And if mind does not have a separate existence, it does not have an identity in

that case how can you have Vishishta Advaita or Dvaita Vada and Shuddha Advaitavada, this Vada and that Vada, how can you have? It is a simple thing.

Those of you who might have read Candide by Voltaire, the great French philosopher and scholar. Candied essentially means innocence.. The protagonist is a very innocent person, and there is a philosopher who has an explanation to everything. Something like our evolutionary biologists nowadays, says that God gave us two legs so that these can be put into a pair of trousers. So, now Candide has some abscess in his ear. That philosopher made it public that Candide will not survive. I read the book long ago so facts may be slightly wrong. He said these are the reasons that he will not survive, and so people knew that he would not survive. But that abscess burst and Candide survived. Then that philosopher wrote a book on why he survived. Candide had read why he was not going to survive. But when the second book came he never read. This is the plight of these philosophers.

See till they are talking about certain explanations belonging to this world, it's perfectly ok. There is nothing wrong with it. But when you exhaust all your energies in explaining things that do not exist, well who will read it? and why should we read it? That we are reading only shows that we are deluded.

So everything is unborn. The very idea of Aja, unborn, when you say that unborn, AjataVada, this itself has to be false. Karika says indeed, it is false. Why?

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अजः कल्पितसंवृत्या परमार्थेन नाप्यजः ।

परतन्त्राभिनिष्पत्त्या संवृत्या जायते तु सः ॥Karika 74॥

Atman is called unborn (Aja) from the standpoint of the illusory empirical experience. It is truly speaking, not even unborn. That unborn Atman appears to be born from the standpoint of the belief of the other schools of thought.

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Atma is called birthless (Ajata) from the standpoint of false knowledge based upon imagination. Imagination that is there in this world, the imagination that has been made extremely strong, by different philosophers and scientists and all those people. To counter that the expression used is birthless. In reality it is not even birthless. Because when you say birthless, the idea of birth remains. Whenever you say no, there has to be a yes also. The unborn is said to be born from the standpoint of false knowledge, cherished by the other schools of thought.

See recently I had one of those matching arguments from whom you can imagine. Their favourite argument is that Hinduism is not even a religion. Because it is not mentioned in Veda or not mentioned in Ramayana etc etc. I told two simple things. One, the British stamp never carried the name of the country because at some point of time they were the only stamp. And when other countries came up with the idea of the stamps they put in the name of their countries. Hinduism did not have its name because it was the only religion, the

original. Only when others come up a name is required to identify. Secondly, the name is a mental construct. Dear listeners, please keep this in mind. The moment you are putting a name to your God, the moment you are putting a name to your scriptures, and the moment you are putting a name to your religion, know that it is a human construct. You can go on talking about that it's given by God, it is God's revelation etc, but note that it is not. What about Hindu religion? Hindu religion says religion is Sanatan. We are Sanatan, we are eternal, there is no name. God, Brahman, there is no name. And Vedas simply means Knowledge. There is no name. Hindu scriptures, Hindu religion itself, and Hindu God have no names. Because, names are a mental construct. And yet we call ourselves Hindu. Why? To counter these people. Because they will not understand.This is what is being said here. That to make people understand that you say that Atman is unborn, Jiva is born and so Jiva has to strive for Mukti. Jiva has to do these, Jiva has to do that. To counter that we say that Atman is actually Aja, unborn. But in reality the idea of being born and being unborn is meaningless. And these when we have such expressions in scriptures it is only because scriptures want to impress those ideas in our mind that in reality you are unborn, in reality you are beyond any change.

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अभूताभिनिवेशोऽस्ति द्वयं तत्र न विद्यते ।
द्वयाभावं स बुद्ध्वैव निर्निमित्तो न जायते ॥ Karika 75॥

Man has mere persistent belief in the reality of the unreal (which is duality). There is no duality (corresponding to such belief). One who has realised the absence of duality is never born again as there remains, no longer, any case (for such birth)

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Actually all these ideas of scriptures and teachers and students, all belong to the relative world. Understand it and be free. And then you can realise that there never was any duality.

So **अभूताभिनिवेशोऽस्ति द्वयं तत्र न विद्यते** - people persistently hold to the idea or unreality that is duality. We are trained since our birth to see duality. Persistently. The subject object relationship, the duality of subject object, I and you, are so persistent in us. But such duality does not exist. One who has realised the absence of duality is not born again. Since there remains no longer any cause for birth. Why does birth take place? Birth takes place simply because we do not know our true nature. We are unaware of our true nature. And the idea that this world is real, this mind is real, and I am real, it has been hammered within us so persistently that now we believe it. There is the story of queen Madalasa, who used to tell her kids, even when they were in cradles, Nityaniranajonosi. You are pure, that you are nityaniranjan. You are eternally pure, there is no impurity in you. Swamiji wanted people to teach their kids these ideas.

This idea of birth comes simply because persistently the idea of subject object duality has been hammered within us. And rebirth is caused because of that. But once you realise that

there is no subject object duality how can there be any rebirth. Now this idea of rebirth that we are discussing, remember that when we talk about birth death etc.,these are expressions from the relative world and those of you have listened to our Kathopanishad talks which is there on Youtube, says rebirth is effected, due to Yatha karma yatha shrutam (as is one's action, so is their future" or "as one acts, so one experiences).

Once you have the knowledge of ultimate oneness, once you get out of this notion that has been persistently hammered within you, of subject object duality, how can there be any birth? So then there is no more rebirth for you. This is what Mandukya is trying to tell us. As Atman we never had birth. But we imagine that we were born. And this imagination is pushing us to rebirths. To stop this cycle of birth and death, to stop this cycle of rebirths, we need to know that we are infinite, we are Atman and that the idea of duality of any form is because it has been hammered in our mind since the time of creation. And that is why we believe it. If you are told a thousand times that you are incapable continuously, you will become incapable. And if people keep on talking very good about you, you will become good. Mothers keep on telling their kids, oh you my son my daughter my baby you are so good. So the baby starts feeling a sense of goodness. The idea of duality has been embraced so much within us that we believe them to be true. But once you can get out from this, you are out of it. It is superimposed on us, hammered in us, and the term is “Agraha”.

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यदा न लभते हेतूनुत्तमाधममध्यमान् ।
तदा न जायते चित्तं हेत्वभावे फलं कुतः ॥ Karika 76॥

When the mind does not find any cause superior, inferior or middling, it becomes free of birth. How can there be an effect without a cause?

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When the mind finds no cause, Superior, inferior or middling, it becomes free from birth. How do you get out of this problem of rebirth? There are three different kinds of rebirth. One, you are born as gods etc. for that you have to perform certain kinds of sacrifices and you have to have certain kinds of knowledge, certain spiritual practices. The middle kind is when you are born as human being and the inferior kind is when you are born in some lower species. Now once you realise that there is no subject object duality there is no such species, naturally you will not be born in any of these things. Rebirth is effected due to lack of knowledge. And because there is this lack of knowledge, we firmly believe that Duality is the truth. Once we believe that duality is the truth, we want to be good, but in our effort to be good, we fail and we end up being medium and sometimes being inferior. And that's what takes us to different species. So he says that once the cause itself is destroyed, there can never be any effect. Once you burn down the seed, how can there be a tree? It is just not possible. So all these scriptures that ask you to perform certain duties, within injunctions and

prohibitions, become meaningless. Why do they become meaningless ? Because you have realised the ultimate truth that it is all one. If there is one, why should you be getting into acts that promote duality?

On to verse 77.

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अनिमित्तस्य चित्तस्य याऽनुत्पत्तिः समाऽद्वया ।

अजातस्यैव सर्वस्य चित्तदृश्यं हि तद्यतः ॥Karika 77॥

The non evolution (i.e.the state of knowledge) of the mind , which is unborn and free from causal relation, is absolute and constant. Everything else is also equally unborn. (So what is true of the mind is true of everything else as well.). For, all duality is merely an objectification of the mind.

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Whatever the duality that you can think of, think of scriptures, think of your teacher, think of yourself as sinner, think of yourself as virtuous, it is all objectification of the mind. There is no object really outside. It is only objectification of the mind. The mind is getting objectified. The mind thinks of those things and those objects appear to us as real. This happens because there has been this persistent conviction, persistent belief that duality is the reality. And once you have realised this truth that heaven etc actually do not exist, then what happens?

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बुध्द्वाऽनिमित्ततां सत्यां हेतुं पृथगनाप्नुवन् ।

वीतशोकं तथा काममभयं पदमश्नुते ॥ Karika 78॥

Having (Thus) realised the absence of causality as the Ultimate truth, and also not finding any other cause (for birth), one attains to that (the state of liberation) which is free from grief, desire and fear.

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Once you have realised that these things do not exist, realising the absence of casualty as the ultimate truth and not finding any other reason for birth, one attains that state which is free from grief, desire and fear. There has to be an impelling force for your rebirth, Once that impelling force is gone, how does it go away? By the knowledge that there is no impelling force. That is the funny thing about it. There is no more rebirth for you, and that idea is repeated in verse 79

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अभूताभिनिवेशाद्धि सदृशे तत्प्रवर्तते ।

वस्त्वभावं स बुद्ध्वैव निःसङ्गं विनिवर्तते ॥ Karika 79॥

On account of attachment to the unreal objects, the mind runs after such objects. But it comes back (to its own pure state) when it becomes unattached (to objects) realising their unreality.

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This is actually the same idea being repeated in different words. You think that mirage has water and you run towards it. But once you have realised that it is a mirage, you don't run towards it. The mind runs towards pleasure, runs away from pain, simply because it thinks then to be real. But once you realise that these are unreal, your mind will not run after that.

This is the state of non-duality. This is the state of true knowledge. Ideas will now be getting repeated in the next verses

58. Destroying Illusions

We have discussed that the absence of casualty is the ultimate truth and when that is realised, one attains that state which is free from grief, desire and fear.

The world runs on cause and effect and the ultimate state of spirituality is beyond any cause and effect. That is why when Vedanta says that you cannot attain God through action, i.e. by doing selfless activity, by doing worship, by studying scriptures and even by mediation. What they mean to say is that, there is no casualty. The common understanding of cause and effect that we have in this world does not hold.

It is wrong to think that noble deeds as we understand, as taught by the society or as told in the scriptures, will lead us to freedom. These things cannot lead you to freedom. They may lead you to Heaven, but heaven belongs to the realm of cause and effect. Do note that freedom does not lie in becoming. Freedom means to be. When you act, when you think, when you pray, when you meditate, whatever you do, you are trying to become something. Freedom lies in being what you are. And we draw in from whatever you already become.

Now this idea is continued in verse no 79, which is very interesting. This has spiritual implications. Also it also has implications for our day to day life. For example we know that we keep on chasing illusions. But why are we chasing illusions? Because when the thing goes away from us, we say oh it was all Maya, it was all illusion. It is very common in India and of course also the west has caught up with this expression, Maya, where they think that anything that sleeps away from your hand is Maya. You ran after wealth and you found that either you never acquired wealth or it slipped through your fingers. You invested a lot in friendship, in certain kinds of relationships and you find that if you were outright cheated, you were outright rejected and then you suddenly feel that it was all chimera, it was all illusion. Naturally the question comes, people will say why did you run and particularly when they say that when you knew that such and such person is like this he or she, why did you run after this person. You don't have the answers. Sometimes you think that in the heart of hearts, well, he might have behaved that way with others but he won't do that to me. When you think of wealth,you think that Mother Lakshmi, the Goddess of wealth, does not stay at a particular place forever. But for me She will because I am her worshipper. Then you find that she did not stay even with you. For example today America is the nation of wealth. Will Ma Lakshmi be there forever? No way! Even if they try, the Goddess will not. Think of India, India was so rich in the past, think of England, it was so rich. But now no more. Well because in our mythology, Mother Lakshmi rides an owl and an owl is considered pretty wise in Western

culture. But in India, owls are equated with stupidity. So wherever the owl takes Mother Lakshmi and wealth and stupidity somehow go together.

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अभूताभिनिवेशाद्धि सदृशे तत्प्रवर्तते ।
वस्त्वभावं स बुद्ध्वैव निःसङ्गं विनिवर्तते ॥ Karika 79॥

Having this realised the absence of causality as the Ultimate Truth, also not finding any other cause (for birth) , one attains to that (the state of liberation) which is free from grief, desire and fear.
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This is actually the same idea being repeated from verse 78 in different words. You think that mirage has water and you run towards it. But once you have realised that it is a mirage, you don't run towards it. The mind runs towards pleasure, runs away from pain, simply because it thinks them to be real. But once you realise that these are unreal, your mind will not run after that. This is the state of non-duality. This is the state of true knowledge. Ideas will now be getting repeated in the next verses.

So why do we keep running after these illusions? Why do we keep running after the chimera? This is explained in verse no 79. It is both from the aspect of spirituality and our day to day life. **अभिनिवेश -** Abhinbesh is attachment, **अभूत** - abhut means that which does not exist. Mirage does not exist and yet we keep running after it. **सदृशे तत्प्रवर्तते** - So once you become identified with an illusion, you start running after it. **वस्त्वभावं स बुद्ध्वैव निःसङ्गं** - once you know that it does not have any substance in it, you move away from it. The English translation is beautiful. On account of attachment to unreal objects, the mind pursues such objects. The mind is a pretty stupid thing, because it cannot distinguish the real from the fake. It cannot distinguish time. And that is why, in early vedic literature you don't find mention of time as present past future. In Indian languages the word for yesterday and tomorrow, both are Kaal, there is no distinction. Mind cannot distinguish. Mind cannot differentiate between an object, a word and an idea. Mind is actually very stupid. And if you give it an occasion to be stupid, it will really act stupidly. It just needs an excuse to act stupidly. Consequently it cannot distinguish the higher truth from the lower truth. It will just run. And that is why we need buddhi or intellect which is just another aspect of mind.

In English of course these words are used in a common way. But when it comes to Hindu psychology, these words have special meaning. One aspect of the mind is intellect, which when fortified, keeps the mind under check. Because the mind cannot distinguish real from fake, it will keep on running after fake, particularly because there is no rebuffing from the fake. The real may even rebuff you. But fake cannot rebuff you, because you live in the world of imagination, that is why people who are into daydreaming, they do not become great achievers. When you daydream, you are imagining things maybe of success or wealth.

There you don't have to make any effort. A mind loves not to make any effort. It loves not to make any effort. And when you are getting the taste of success, just sitting in your room sitting on your bed, why should you make any effort. And once the mind realises there is something, (which in reality is Abastu, it has no substance), it gets attached and once it gets attached, it keeps chasing it. That is why we suffer. That is why it is important to study scriptures, important to be with masters and saints. This makes our intellect powerful. Once the intellect becomes powerful, the mind can be goaded to stick to making efforts. Running after illusion does not require any effort. I don't know if modern management and psychology books have really highlighted this point. But this is important. Very important.

Mind is actually a very stupid thing. If you can somehow make your intellect, that is buddhi powerful, so powerful that it can understand the difference between real and the fake, then it can be forced to stay with the real. And not run after the fake.

What is fake in this world? Everything is a fake. That is why it has been discussed, anything that seems to follow the law of cause and effect, wherever there is causality, know that you will have casualty. Remember causality and casualty are related. All the casualties in our life are born because we believe in casualty and we run after things that seem to follow the laws of casualty. Once a person recognises that it is a mirage, it is an illusion, he returns from there.

Once you realise that this relation of cause and effect which we have given so much of value, is a fake, mind returns, returns from the entire world. Then you cannot say this object is like this and that object is like that. You will then stop chasing illusions, you will stop trying to become this and that, and slowly you get established in being what you are. This is being described in the next verse.

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निवृत्तस्याप्रवृत्तस्य निश्चला हि तदा स्थितिः ।

विषयः स हि बुद्धानां तत्साम्यमजमद्वयम् ॥ Karika 80॥

The mind thus freed from attachment (to all external objects) and undistracted (by fresh objects) attains to its state of immutability. Being actually realised by the wise, it is undifferentiated, birthless and non-dual

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When this mind is free from all these diversions, all these attachments to external objects, then it means that some kind of detachment has come and is undistracted by fresh objects. When you get rejected by someone, for example suppose you are trying for a job, you apply and you get the rejection letter, and then you go to some other place and you try there. It is the same with life. You lose your love and then you try for another love. You go for fresh objects and more fresh objects. And it is a never ending process. But once you have realised that this whole world is a chimera, the whole world is an illusion, then what happens? It is a complete detachment and prakriti, mother nature, then cannot supply you

with fresh objects because every fresh object that is coming from nature, you will know that it follows the law of cause and effect and it is under causality and so you don't need it. So the mind attains this state of immutability. Mind does not waver any more. When does the mind waver? Mind will waver when it feels that it can get something. When you know that you cannot get anything from here, you will not be running after it. Your mind will not undergo any kind of transformation. And that state is known as immutability. **तदा स्थितिः** - Becomes fixed, becomes permanent. The wise realise such a mind to be Brahman. This kind of mind, pure mind, pure soul, and pure intellect are one and the same. It is Brahman. This we have been discussing earlier also. There is no difference between Atman and Buddhi, just that buddhi appears to be something different. Why? When it is moving, when it is chasing illusions, we call it Buddhi. When it is not chasing illusions, it is Atman. This has been very beautifully said in very simple words in Yog philosophy. We have these talks on Yog philosophy in our channel. That Chitta Vritti Nirodh, Tada Drashtuh Svarupe Avasthanam - तदा द्रष्टुः स्वरूपेऽवस्थानम् -there is cessation of movement of the mind. You are what you are. Otherwise you are one with your vritti. Literally at the highest level, Yog and Vedanta philosophies are one. Just that Yog philosophy's understanding of Atman and understanding of Ishwara and Brahman - are slightly skewed because it depends heavily on Samkhya Philosophy. Otherwise everything is the same. And this is what Gaudapada's Karika is also saying. Mandukya Karika is telling us the same thing that Yog Philosophy says. So what is the truth? The truth is either you treat everything as Brahman or you treat everything as an illusion, other than Brahman. You see this pen as a manifestation of Brahman or you see it as an illusion, Maya. Don't see this pen as an object having a reality. Some people have been talking about this MayaVada or VijnanaVada. It is all about your perception. Sometimes you will focus a lot on all these as an illusion and sometimes you will focus on all this is Brahman, - Sarvam Khalvidam Brahma - this is one of those very famous statements from the Upanishads. All that is, is Brahman. Whatever you see is Brahman. There is nothing other than Brahman. The problem is that we are trained to think of things as objects with a reality. So understanding becomes slightly skewed. The wise realise such a mind which is not chasing illusions and that the whole world is an illusion. If you are seeing the whole thing as Brahman, why should you be running after anything? Because things do not exist. The existence of those things is because of Maya. Maya makes certain aspects of Brahman look like objects. Now Maya is gone. So the objects are gone. Who will run? After whom? I tell you Vednata is an extremely fascinating truth. It should not be treated as a philosophy. Vedanta is not a philosophy. Vedanta is the truth. It is the fundamental truth of life. When the mind is like this oneness, pure consciousness, with no modification permitted, no transformation, no transmutation, this is Brahman. And what is the nature of Atman?

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अजमनिद्रमस्वप्नं प्रभातं भवति स्वयम् ।

सकृद्विभातो ह्येवैष धर्मो धातुस्वभावतः ॥ Karika 81॥

(Reality which is) free from birth, and (which is) free from sleep and dream, reveals itself by itself. For this Dharma (i.e. Atman) is from its very nature ever-luminous.

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And this Atman, this buddhi which we have been discussing, does not undergo any transformation any more. There is no chitta vritti any more. All chitta Vritti have ceased to exist. That means there is no kind of movement. There is no transformation, no transmutation, it has become immutable. Then, **अजमनिद्रमस्वप्नं प्रभातं भवति स्वयम् ।**

सकृद्विभातो ह्येवैष धर्मो धातुस्वभावतः ॥ - Mandukya Karika is describing your nature, my nature. Your reality, my reality. This Atman is being referred to here as Dharma. It is birthless. It is never born. It is dreamless. It never dreams. Sleepless, that means it never goes in that state of Sushupti, deep sleep, Aswapnam- no dream state and anidram , anidram here is sleepless, it does not sleep. And prabhatam bhabati sayam - reality reveals itself. You don't require anything else to reveal its reality. Neither intellect is needed nor someone's words are needed. It reveals by itself. When you get your realisation, you know you are realised. For, this Dharma, by its very nature, is self luminous. Being self- luminous when you get self-knowledge, you know that you have self-knowledge, and you know that it is beyond any kind of birth, beyond any kind of sleep, beyond any kind of dream. This is our nature, our true nature. The most important thing is that it reveals by itself. Nothing can reveal it. Because it is itself, nothing can reveal that, it is me. I know that it is me.

There is one incident about which mother Sarada Devi, the holy mother, for us she is the mother of the universe. Once she was meditating and she lost her body consciousness. And then said to her companion “where are my hands, where are my legs?”. Companion pointed out here is your hand and here is your leg. But mind it, the holy mother was not conscious of her hands and legs. But she was conscious of her individuality. You may seem to forget that you have hands, you have legs, you may forget to remember your face, but you never forget your I-ness. It is self revealed.

We don't yet know what happens when a person is in a coma. But once a person is out of coma, the first thing that he is aware of is his I-ness. When a person goes into nirvikalpa samadhi and when he is back, he is conscious of himself, I-ness. This I -ness manifests in this world as mind. And once the mind stops transforming itself, you realise that this is Atman, this is Brahman. Why does not everyone realise this? It is a wonderful thing. A lot of bloodshed will stop in this world. A lot of wastage will stop. Mother earth will smile again. We won't have to worry about the environment. You don't have to worry about pollution.

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सुखमाव्रियते नित्यं दुःखं विव्रियते सदा ।
यस्य कस्य च धर्मस्य ग्रहेण भगवानसौ ॥Karika 82॥

On account of mind apprehending single objects , the Bliss (i.e. the real essence of the Self) always remains concealed and misery comes to the surface. Therefore the ever-effulgent Lord is not realised though taught again and again by Scriptures and teachers.

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The problem is that in this creation Atman, being referred to here as Bhagawan, the Supreme Lord, appears in this world as Maya, so it gets covered by anything and everything. The translation says that The Lord, The Atman becomes easily hidden because of attachment to any single object and revealed with great difficulty. When children play hide and seek, particularly if it is a large house where there are excellent places to hide, they just hide. It might be a difficult thing to seek them out. Similarly the great Lord, Atman, everything is His own creation and that is why it gets hidden very easily and once it gets hidden, it is so difficult to reveal it. It is in the nature of Atman.

When there is no creation, then this problem does not exist. But in this creation, it is a very serious problem. And this we also get in Kathopanishad, parāñci khāni vyatṛṇatsvayambhūstasmātparāṅpaśyati nāntarātman (पराञ्चि खानि व्यतृणत्स्वयम्भूस्तस्मात्पराङ्पश्यति नान्तरात्मन् ।) - this Atman is inside. And its connection with the senses are cut. Consequently you always see the external world. We don't even desire to see the inner one. And this is Maya. Atman has a tendency to get covered. It actually does not hide but it gets covered very easily. And we have no idea why it gets covered easily. Because that is its power and that being its power you cannot find an answer to it, and is known as Maya. Maya is the divine power. It gets so easily hidden. And because it gets easily hidden, we cannot know it. And once it gets hidden, although self revealing by nature, it can be revealed only by great difficulty. All our spiritual exercises all spiritual efforts are intended towards that. So near yet so far. Nothing can be nearer to us than our Atman. And yet because we are ignorant nothing is further. तद् दूरे तद्वन्तिके - That is far and the same is near (Ishopanishad). People who are willing to exercise extreme wisdom after learning of it from a truly wise and enlightened person, can realise what Atman is, what is its nature and how it can be found. It can be found with great difficulty because you are that. And then Karika says that people misconceive the notion of Atman as it exists and does not exist and it exists not. It is a very beautiful verse

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अस्ति नास्त्यस्ति नास्तीति नास्ति नास्तीति वा पुनः ।
चलस्थिरोभयाभावैरावृणोत्येव बालिशः ॥ Karika 83॥

Childish persons verily cover It (fail to know it) by predicating of It such attributes as existence, non-existence, existence and non-existence and absolute non-existence , derived respectively from their notion of change, immovability, combination of both and absolute negation.
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बालिशः - Balish means an ignorant person. People who have not realised Atman as being the ultimate reality, Atman alone has been reality etc., perceive Atman variously as asti, na-asti - **अस्ति नास्त्यस्ति नास्तीति नास्ति नास्तीति**. Some say it exists, some say it does not exist, some say it exists and does not exist, and some say it does not exist. So many different ideas. So say it moves, some say it does not move etc. They are ignorant with their childish minds, **बालिशः**, verily cover Atman by predicating often such attributes as existence, non-existence, existence and non-existence, non-existence. Deriving these characteristics from the notion of change, immovability, combination of change and immovability and absolute negation associated with Atman. So different schools of philosophy attach different characteristics to Atman. Something that moves, something that does not move, something that moves and moves not etc.. and so we have four different kinds of outlook for Atman. One is it exists, another is it does not exist, third is it exists and does not exist and lastly it definitely does not exist. For the first one that it exists comes from Vaisheshik school of thought, which is one of the Vedic schools of thought. And they think that Atman is associated with everything and because things transform so Atman also transforms. So Atman exists but it is kind of associated with the mind. Mind changes so Atman also changes. That is their view.
And then there are the Buddhists. They say that it does not exist. This is Ksanika VijnanaVada. Karika addresses them as Vainashik.
Then Karika addresses Ardha Vainashik who are the Jains and they say that it exists and it does not exist.
And lastly we have ShunyaVadis which say that no it does not exist.
If you ask me at a personal level, it is so difficult. I mean, if you read the biography of Shri Ramakrishna in detail, one thing you realise is that, becoming spiritual may not be very difficult but realising the Supreme truth as Atman alone may not be possible for you. But the more serious problem is that you don't even want it. For example there is someone who is a devotee of Lord Vishnu, there is someone who is devotee of Lord Krishna, they do not want to know Atman. For them if they can be one with Lord Krishna that is more than enough. If they can be the servant of Lord Krishna, that is enough for them. They don't want anything more. And if you don't want anything more, how can you even strive for it? If you do not strive for it, how will you attain it? So this problem is there. Existence and non–existence, if you take these two criteria then Atman can be categorised into four. Karika says that these approaches are childish. Of course Vedanta is addressed by its critics in far more severe

terms. And when does a person come out of this ignorance? When does a person become mature as far as Vedanta is concerned

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कोटयश्चतस्र एतास्तु ग्रहैर्यासां सदाऽऽवृतः ।

भगवानाभिरस्पृष्टो येन दृष्टः स सर्वदृक् ॥कारिका 84॥

These are the four alternative theories regarding (the nature of) Atman, on account of attachment to which It always remains covered (from one's view). He who has known that Atman is ever untouched by any of these (predicates) indeed sees it all.

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Translations say these are the four theories regarding Atman. Through attachment to which Atman always remains hidden from once views. Once you realise the truth, you will realise that Atman the Supreme Lord never gets touched by these characteristics. Once you realise that these are not touched then you are sarbajna - **सर्वदृक्** - you know the truth, you have realised the truth, you can see the truth.

Ultimately, whenever you come across the theory of self, you will meet one of these four categories. There is no fifth. It exists but is changeable. It does not exist. It exists and it does not exist. And it does not absolutely exist. Certain properties, certain characteristics are superimposed on Atman and that is why things are seen that way. Once you realise that Atman cannot be associated with any such change or any such negation, then you become knower of Atman. That means you have realised the supreme. Now you have realised the truth.

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प्राप्य सर्वज्ञतां कृत्स्नां ब्राह्मण्यं पदमद्वयम् ।

अनापन्नादिमध्यान्तं किमतः परमीहते ॥ Karika 85॥

What else remains for him to be desired when he has attained to the state of Brahmana - a state of complete omniscience, non-duality and a state which is without beginning, end or middle.

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Actually these verses are straight and simple. So we don't even need to explain much. What else remains for him to be desired by him who has attained the state of Brahman - a state of complete omniscience and non-duality which is without beginning, end or middle. Life has a beginning, life has a middle, life has an end. Every object in this universe has a beginning, has a middle and has an end. But once you realise that Atman, the Supreme reality, the pure consciousness, you know that it does not undergo any such change. More importantly it does not get touched by such changes. Either it undergoes those changes or it is touched by those changes. You know Brahman, and once you know Brahman, what else remains to be desired by you? All illusions have vanished, there is no more any illusion, why should one be running after any illusion?

Let me tell you a personal experience. It is childish but I did not forget it. Long ago, maybe 20 or 25 years back, I had a very vivid dream. I felt that I was surrounded by huge creatures

and they were not violent but huge creatures. In fact they were a kind of Godly. And I did not know how to go beyond them, how to cross them. I found that somebody gave me a bow and arrows. And said shoot at them. Then I started shooting, I realised that each of those figures were just like posters which were falling down from heights. I wont say sky but heights. One arrow, one poster down. Another arrow, another poster down. Now, the impression left by this dream has never left me. I am not a person who will give too much value to such dreams. It means nothing. Or maybe I was reading something those days, which created that dream. Or it might be an indicator of something. But what is very interesting is that these are illusions. I don't need too many arrows to shoot them down. The arrow is “no causality”,”no cause and effect relationship”.

You are not witness to anything. How can you be witness to anything? You are what you are. If there is nothing to witness, what will you witness?

Once you have realised that four categories that are described, are just not possible so you become established in the knowledge of Brahman like those posters had described, falling away. What does it mean? Nothing? Only you exist. Move on. I never saw the person who was with me there. So it was a very interesting dream. People who get such fascinating dreams also get nightmares. I am extremely lucky not to have nightmares ever in my life. Maybe when I was a kid, probably I saw but I had more nightmares in life, you may say daymares but in dreams never. Actually it is all an illusion. And you can shoot it down, one by one, or if you can take up the philosophy in one go.

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विप्राणां विनयो ह्येष शमः प्राकृत उच्यते ।

दमः प्रकृतिदान्तत्वादेवं विद्वाञ्शमं व्रजेत् ॥ Karika 86॥

This (i.e. the realisation of Brahman) is the humility natural to Brahmanas. Their tranquility (of mind) is also declared to be spontaneous (by men of discrimination). They are said to have attained to the state of sense-control (not through any artificial method as it comes quite natural to them). He who thus realises Brahman which is all peace, himself becomes peaceful and tranquil.

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We find in our spiritual literature that a person who is considered to be a noble person,a gentleman, has to have certain qualities like humility, self-control, mind-control etc.. And verse 86 is beautifully saying that. Once a person realises that he is Brahman, once a person realises that he has nothing to achieve in this world, he automatically becomes humble. His senses come under control. His organs come under control. Verse 86 says humility, the Vinaya, of the Brahmins are natural. Brahmin means one who is established in knowledge of Brahman. Their tranquility is also natural. **शमः** -Sham. Their senses don't go screaming around, they don't go screaming after objects. Further the control of senses, and control of organs comes natural to them. **शमः** - Shama and **दमः** -Dama have been defined as , control of five senses and control of five organs respectively. It comes naturally to them.

them. When you know that there is nothing to run after, the control will come automatically. He who has realised the Brahman attains peace. We want peace in life. Know who you are, you will have peace. All your disturbance , all pain in life are caused simply because we don't know who we are. Because we don't know who we are. We are continuously trying to become something. And once we try to become something, there is pain, there is suffering, there is misery.

So we discussed what is illusion, why we run after illusion, what is detachment and what happens when you get attached. In verse 87, the discussion changes, the type of discussion itself changes.

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सवस्तु सोपलम्भं च द्वयं लौकिकमिष्यते ।
अवस्तु सोपलम्भं च शुद्धं लौकिकमिष्यते ॥Verse 87॥

(Vedanta) recognises the ordinary (empirical) state of waking in which duality, consisting of objects and ideas of coming in contact with them, is known. It further recognises another more subtle state (i.e., the dream common to all) in which is experienced duality, consisting of the idea of coming in contact with the objects, though such objects do not exist.

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Verse no 87 is so interesting that you may not even agree to it. Says that Vedanta which we are discussing, recognises the ordinary state of waking, which we are in, in which duality exists, consisting objects and the idea of coming in contact with them. For example, here is this pen. Waking state says that this is a pen, and my senses get identified with this pen, we accept that. It is admitted. Vedanta also recognises a purer ordinary state, which is the dream state in which is experienced duality consisting of objects and the idea of coming in contact with them, but such objects do not exist. This is so difficult. When I first read this, I was quite startled, I couldn't use any other word. Says that when we dream something and when we wake up, We always say oh it is just a dream. But Karika says just the reverse. It says that the waking state is inferior. Why? Because in the waking state there is an association of your mind with an idea, and there is an association of your mind with the objects too. Although objects do not exist. In dream state at least you have association only with the idea. Because no objects exist. So, dream is actually a purer state of existence. Oh God! This is frightening. Vedanta can be frightening for people.

And when you go to the dreamless state, even those ideas merge. It is a far purer state of existence. In the beginning when we were discussing the three states, it was explained. Surprisingly if you talk to dream experts, if you talk to neurologists they will put the dream as the worst, dreamless as better and waking as best. Because whatever theory they have to offer, whatever they want to teach us, they will have to teach us through the waking state. So waking state is superior. However for Karika, the waking state is terrible because not only is

your mind getting attached to ideas, it is also getting attached to objects which do not exist in reality.
As per the discussions that we had, the dream state is purer because at least you don't perceive objects. And the dreamless state is far superior where even the merge into one single ignorance. It is not a state of enlightenment. It is a state of ignorance. The words Loukik etc., are used to explain that.
This world is not only attached with ideas, you are also attached with the objects and the objects which do not exist. This is kind of a double illusion. Illusion of ideas, illusion of objects.

59. The End

We had already said that the waking state deals with objects and the dream state deals only with ideas and hence the dream state is superior to the waking state, because illusion is less, as the extent of delusion determines what is the worst state. Normally we think that the waking state is superior. But Mandukya Karika shows how the waking state is inferior. Naturally when you go to the third state Sushupti, deep sleep, then even the ideas vanish and it becomes a mass of ignorance. So you have three. One consciousness of objects, consciousness of ideas and consciousness of ignorance. When you come out you say oh! How wonderfully I slept. And I knew nothing. Every time you say I knew nothing, you are basically talking about your ignorance. And then there is the fourth state which is mass of knowledge. So there is mass of knowledge, then there is mass of ignorance and there are only ideas and then there are objects. Vedanta lays a lot of stress on knowing these three states. Because once you have understood these three states, waking, dream and deep sleep, it automatically helps you focus on the fourth - Turiya.

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अवस्त्वनुपलम्भं च लोकोत्तरमिति स्मृतम् ।
ज्ञानं ज्ञेयं च विज्ञेयं सदा बुद्धैः प्रकीर्तितम् ॥ Karika 88॥

There is another state (admitted by the wise) which is free from contact with (external) objects and altogether free from the idea of coming in contact with objects. This state is beyond all empirical experiences. The wise always describe the three, viz., Knowledge, Knowledge of the objects and Knowledge as the Supreme Reality (which is ultimately knowable).

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लोकोत्तर - Lokottara, (lok is this world), means superior to this world. It is that state where you are not with the ideas or with the objects. The wise recognise another state that is compared to the waking, and dream, in which there exists neither objects nor ideas regarding them.

This state is beyond all empirical experiences. You experience neither the objects nor the ideas. They describe the three as Knowledge, the objects of knowledge, (that is the three states) and knowledge of the supreme reality, which is ultimate reality.
So there are three things to be known.
As far as Vedanta is concerned, we mentioned how in Vedanta, these three play a very important role and says, "Jnanam Jneyam cha Vijneyam" (ज्ञानम, ज्ञेयम च विज्ञेयम) . Jnan is knowledge - knowledge of the three states. Jneya means object of knowledge - the three states. And Vijneyam, which should be known specially - that is Turiya. I knew of a great monk in Uttarakhand, not from the Ramakrishna Mission. He said that he has read only one book in his life. And that is the three states. Not the book. But the three states of his own mind. He said, if anything is to read in this world, it is the three states of your own mind. So, Jnan is knowledge ,Jneya is the object of knowledge. What is to be studied, what is to be read, are your three states of existence. And Vijneya is what is beyond these three states and this is to be known really. It is through these three that the fourth is known.
We have mentioned earlier too, these three states, that is, the waking, dream and dreamless or deep sleep, are characterised by the three divisions of Jnyata, Jneya and Jnana. There is a knower, there is knowledge and there is the object of knowledge. Even when you are in deep sleep, and you come out of it, these three continue. You say I slept peacefully. So the object is there, which is Sushupti, and knowledge of it is there and you are there. In the fourth Turiya, there is no Jnayta (Knower), there is no Jnana (knowledge) , there is no Jneya (object of knowledge). All three become one. Knower is the known and that which is known is knowledge. These are really very profound, and yet very simple. Subject object and the relationship, the verb, the action. All merge into one. That is the state we all aspire for. When Bhagwan Buddha was talking about Nirvana, he was talking about this, where all three become one. Advaita talks about one. Even our Dvaita and Vishista Advaita, when they talk about merging into God, they are talking about this only. Outside that there is nothing to be known. When we say, Jnyata, Jneya Jnana it is all about three states, not about God realisation. Now the fourth one is where these three merge. We have discussed these things so many times earlier that we don't need to elaborate further. Just remember that according to Mandukya Karika, there is this division of the three, Jnata, Jneya and Jnana. But this Jnata, Jneyo, and Jnan is actually about waking state, dream state and dreamless. Whatever your knowledge pertains to these three. But when it comes to Vijneya, Atman, or Turiya these three merge into one. Once you have understood that all your knowledge, all your activity pertains to these three states, you are now ready for the fourth.

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ज्ञाने च त्रिविधे ज्ञेये क्रमेण विदिते स्वयम् ।

सर्वज्ञता हि सर्वत्र भवतीह महाधियः ॥ Karika 89॥

Knowledge and the threefold knowable being known, one after another, the knower possessed of the highest reason spontaneously attains to the state of knowledge everywhere and in all things in this very life

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Having known knowledge and the three fold knowable, one after another, the knower endowed with Supreme intellect attains in this very life and everywhere the state of omniscience. It is so beautiful. That Jnana is of three kinds, waking, dream and deep sleep. Once you understand this all my knowledge pertains to these three and naturally you will have three different kinds of knower. One is the knower which is in the waking state, one is who is in the dream and one who is in the deep sleep. And the object is of three different kinds. So, once these three states are realised, the three states, the three knowers, you think that you have changed. But actually you don't change. The you of the waking, the you of the dream, and you of sushupti are all one. It is only initially you think that well I have become this, in dream, I have become this and I became ignorant etc.. All these things seem as if "I" is changing. If you analyse you will understand that actually "I" does not change. And once you have understood and if your intellect is sharp enough, they will be talking more about it. Once you realise the truth of these three, you get rid of it and say that no, I don't want any of these three states. Then you get established self knowledge, omniscience. Because it is the Atman that pervades everything. It is the Atman which appears in the waking state, it is Atman that appears in the dream state and in deep sleep. Acharya Shanakr says very beautifully that, whom do you call an intelligent person? Who can grasp things very fast. Whom do we call a scholar? One who has knowledge of many things. And one who knows all the three states, and is sitting in the fourth, naturally he is Sarbajna. There is nothing else left for him to know. Very often, people think that a Sarvajna will know about every small thing. It is not so. Sarvajna is one who knows the three states, because there is nothing else to be known.

Sarvajna is a very beautiful term used in Advaita Vedanta. Sarvajna does not mean that he will know how much money you have. He will not know how many houses he has. Probably he may have. But that belongs to the realm of siddhi. That is nothing about Sarvajnata. Sarvajnata means one who has known the three states of existence. And he knows the knowledge related to those three. And he knows that "I" does not change in these three. He knows everything. He may not know worldly subjects like Physics, Chemistry etc.. Like Sri Ramakrishna did not know Physics chemistry etc., but he was a Sarvajna. And because his grasp of knowledge has extended to these three states, just like a scholar whose sphere of knowledge is huge, the sphere of knowledge of such persons is huge. A person established in self knowledge, knows the three stages, being established in the fourth. Now unless you are established in the fourth, you cannot know the three. And then the greatest achievement

by such a person is that he never loses that knowledge. Because, whenever we gain some knowledge there is a possibility of losing that too. Information is readily lost. Even knowledge is lost. But once you get established in the knowledge of the self, that knowledge never goes away. It will always remain there. You have known the truth.

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हेयज्ञेयाप्यपाक्यानि विज्ञेयान्यग्रयाणतः ।

तेषामन्यत्र विज्ञेयादुपलम्भस्त्रिषु स्मृतः ॥ Karika 90॥

The four things to be known first are: the thing to be avoided, the objects to be realised, the things to be attained (by practice) and thoughts to be rendered ineffective. Among these four, the three things , excepting what is to be realised, viz., the Supreme Reality, exist only as imagination.

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There are certain things for every vedantin to realise. One should be conversant at the very outset about four things.. First is **हेय** (heya) - things to be avoided , second is **ज्ञेय** (Jneya) - things to be attained, third is **प्राप्तब्य(**Praptabya) - objects to be realised and last is **प्रशमनीय** (Prashamaniya) - things to be rendered ineffective. These are the first things to be avoided. The first thing is the things to be avoided - **हेय ,** Heya. Second is the goal to be realised - **ज्ञेय,** Jneya. The discipline to follow - **आप्य** Apya, the tendencies to be subdued - **पाक्य** (pakya) . They are beautiful. **हेय, ज्ञेय,आप्य, पाक्य**. These are the four things if you can remember, four essential things that everyone needs to practice during Vedanta Sadhana.

Heya - is the three states, Jagrata, Swapna, Sushupti. They need to be discarded. Don't focus on any of these three. Neither on waking, nor on the dream, nor on deep sleep. You have to remember that these are just three states. the way you mistake a snake in a rope, do not think it is the goal to be attained.

Parmarthatatwa, atman alone is Jneya. This was mentioned as Vijnyea to differentiate from the knowledge of the three states. The only thing you need to focus on is Self, Atman. And once you want to go into the knowledge, once you want to go into the knowledge of Atman, every ऐषणा, desire has to be given up. Only three things are to be kept. They are Panditya, Balya and Mauna. These are the three essential qualities. Panditya is scholarship. You must have a thorough scholarship of Veda and Vedanta. You must know scriptures very well. It is not possible for people to just acquire Vedantic knowledge, by listening to this talk or reading one book. One has to have scholarship. And the second is Balya, Balya actually comes from Bal. Bal means inquisitiveness like a child. A kid is very curious, highly inquisitive. They have spontaneity. They don't hide anything. This is also about inquisitiveness - inquisitive about Paramarthagyan., Like Einstein had very famously said that I do not have any special talents. I am just immensely curious. This is Balya - spontaneity. You want to go for it. And

lastly comes Mauna. Don't talk unnecessarily. These are the only things that you need to attain. Everything else has to go away. You need to focus on the scriptures that talk about Atman. You need to be spontaneous. Always ready for it. Curious to know about Atman, and lastly silence. Silence of everything. Silent in your speech, silent in your actions. So these are the only things that are Praptabya. These are the only things that take you forward. Panditya (Scholarship), Balya (spontaneity), Maunam(silence). And there are certain things that need to be loosened. They are Rag, Dwesh - attachment and aversion. Attachment , aversion cannot go. You know very often people talk about how to overcome my weakness. You cannot overcome your weakness. But you can lessen it. The bonds of attachment, aversion, likes, dislikes, love, hatred, these things cannot go away. You can loosen it. So that these emotions do not sway you away. So, anyone who wants to do Vedantic Sadhana has to have these four things - Heya, Jneya, Apya and Pakya. You need to get rid of certain things completely, you need to know what is to be known. You need to have certain basic qualities like Panditya, Balya, Maun. and you need to lessen the bonds of attachment aversion etc. Once you focus on these things you are now ready for the great journey. So all these discussions and arguments, encounters are all over. Mandukya Karika is now leading you towards Supreme realisation.

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प्रकृत्याऽऽकाशवज्ज्ञेयाः सर्वे धर्मा अनादयः ।
विद्यते न हि नानात्वं तेषां क्वचन किञ्चन ॥ Karika 91॥

All the dharmas (entities) are, by their very nature, beginningless and unattached like Akasa. There is not the slightest variety in them, in any way, at any time.

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Interestingly, although it is talking about Atman only, it says all Atman as Dharmas are to be known, by their very nature, to be beginningless, unattached like Akasa. There is not the slightest variety there in any way or at any time. Interestingly the word used here is Akasa in plural. But it clarifies that actually it is all one, beginningless and there is not the slightest variety. It is all same. We feel that souls are different. But Mandukya just makes clear that no, Atman although they appear to be different, they are one. Beginningless. And there is not the slightest variety. When he says, **विद्यते न हि नानात्वं तेषां क्वचन किञ्चन** - there is under no condition any kind of multiplicity there. It is all same. It is all one. Those of you who have studied Gita, you will find this idea coming repeatedly. At times Gita will be talking as if there are multiple souls and then it will switch over to oneness. And then anyone with a very simple intellect can make out multiplicity of souls, multiplicity of Atman, multiplicity of Jiva is Upachar matra, it is just to make us understand certain things. In reality multiplicity cannot be there because oneness is also talked about. When you say that there are many, and actually they are one, it automatically implies that one is the truth and multiplicity is the

appearance. Because no other way is possible. You cannot have multiplicity as the truth and oneness as the appearance. It is not possible.

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आदिबुद्धाः प्रकृत्यैव सर्वे धर्माः सुनिश्चिताः ।
यस्यैवं भवति क्षान्तिः सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते ॥Karika 92॥

All Jivas are, by their very nature, illumined from the very beginning and they are ever immutable in their nature. He, who having known this, rests without (Sees the needlessness of) seeking further knowledge, is alone capable of realising the Highest Truth.

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This expression **सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते** means he becomes capable of attaining self knowledge.

Who becomes capable of attaining self knowledge? All Jivas that means, you, me and all. As Swamiji says, each soul is potentially divine. We already know that multiple souls are not possible. But from the standpoint of the relative world, we say, each soul, many souls. The verse says that all Jivas are by their very nature illumined from the very beginning. As Swamiji says, each soul is potentially divine. You are already divine. But it is covered. This is what this verse says. Illumined from the very beginning, it is not that you have to acquire. It is not something that you have to acquire. If you take the path of Bhakti, you have to acquire Bhakti. In this world, you have to acquire something. In the path of knowledge you don't have to acquire anything. Because you are already that.

So all Jivas, by their very nature, are illumined from the very beginning. There can never be any doubt about their nature. One who has known this, rests without seeking further knowledge and is alone capable of attaining immortality. Once you realise that all knowledge is within me, you won't go on running after this knowledge or that knowledge. One then has the Supreme Knowledge. There is a discussion on this in Raja Yog. As you proceed inside a time comes when you realise that you don't need to read anything anymore. And then you reach Dharmamegha Samadhi where all knowledge is ready. Any minute it may start pouring down on you. It is surprising that different systems of thought talk about the same thing. All knowledge is within you. And because all knowledge is within you, why should you run after this and that? We run after those simply because we think we are ignorant.

So as I mentioned, the monk at Haridwar who said that he has read only one book and that is all the three states. That is the only thing to be known. **आदिबुद्धाः प्रकृत्यैव सर्वे धर्माः सुनिश्चिताः** - all the Jivas have all the knowledge. Once you realise this, you become calm, you won't keep on running after anything. Not even after knowledge. Only then you are ready for Atmajnana. **सोऽमृतत्वाय कल्पते** - he is alone capable of attaining immortality. That means running after wealth, running after the opposite sex, running after fame are bad enough and running after knowledge is also bad enough. What we are discussing is, highest

level of spiritual sadhana. These things are not meant for ordinary people. Once you have some preparation, once you have started moving onwards, only then this can be done.

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आदिशान्ता ह्यनुत्पन्नाः प्रकृत्यैव सुनिर्वृताः ।

सर्वे धर्माः समाभिन्ना अजं साम्यं विशारदम् ॥Karika 93॥

All Dharmas or Jivas are from the very beginning and by their very nature, all peace, unborn and completely free. They are characterised by the sameness and are non- separate from one another. Therefore the Jivas are Atman unborn, always established in 'sameness' and 'purity' itself .

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The Jivas from the very beginning and by their very nature all peace, unborn and completely free. Swami Vivekananda said, all power is within you, all knowledge is within you, everything is within you. And within every soul.

First it talked about knowledge. Now it talks about peace and freedom. We are eternally free. Balgangadhar Tilak had said freedom is your birthright. Indeed it is. But here it is not freedom from foreign rules and all. But freedom from the cycle of birth and death. They are characterised by sameness, samatva. There is no difference between a Brahman and a Chandal. There is no difference between the soul of Brahmin and that of a dog. There is no separateness of any kind. You might wonder then, if these are the guiding scriptures, then why Hindus practice so much of discrimination? Because discrimination is practised at the level of the society. Oneness belongs to the level of spirituality. In society there can never be oneness. There will always be Kings, ministers and those who carry out their order. Otherwise society will go to ruins. But at the spiritual plain there is oneness. Those of you who have been listening to our talks, might have come across this statement from me many times. We do not talk of different kinds of heaven for different classes of people. We don't talk about different kinds of Mukti for different classes of people. Oneness belongs to spirituality. The difference will always be there in the social structure. It is for society to work out how to lessen this difference in the social structure. Sages are not responsible for it. Neither they created it, nor they are responsible for correcting it. It is for the leaders, it is for the Kings to change the situation.

Now because this is the nature of Atman, it does not even have to strive for freedom, because you are already free. Oh! This is too profound, too profound!. You are already free. What are you striving for? But this is being said from the highest standpoint. Those who do not understand this, are miserly. They are limited beings. Kripan.

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वैशारद्यं तु वै नास्ति भेदे विचरतां सदा ।

भेदनिम्नाः पृथग्वादास्तस्मात्ते कृपणाः स्मृताः ॥ Karika 94॥

Those who always rely on (attach themselves to) separateness can never realise the innate purity of the self. Therefore those who are drowned in the idea of separateness and who assert the separateness of (entities) are called narrow minded.

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Those who always wonder in the realm of separateness cannot realise the purity of Atman. You know this caste system in India, this is not a product of Advaita. This is a product of Dvaita and Vishishta Advaita. Because they practice separateness in their religion. If you practice separateness in philosophy how can you have oneness in society? That is why, when Swami Vivekanada was talking about India, he was continuously talking about unity and oneness. This was because he was established in Advaita. Advaita does not discriminate. What should be the religion of India? Unquestionably Advaita. But the problem is that people cannot grasp it. That is why we have Vishishta Advaita and Dvaita and Bhakti and all those things. Because if your outlook, your religion and spirituality permit multiplicity, separateness, it will be shown in social behaviour. As we find in Abrahamic religions. Their religions are based on separateness and it shows in society. For them it is us and them. Advaita does not believe in it. Advaita has to be the religion of the future. If you want unity, if you want peace in the world, Advaita has to be the faith, call it by any name.

It is the problem of the dualists that they practice separateness and naturally it is impossible for them to grasp this philosophy of non-duality. Verse no 94 says, those who always wonder in the realm of separateness, you are always in the world of separateness, you never feel that you are one, you naturally have this problem and so naturally you are kripan, miserly, narrow minded. Kripan is used in many different senses. One of these is miserly, which means tight fisted, narrow minded. A tight fisted person is narrow minded. And those who are of lesser intellect, those who have limited intellect, they cannot understand Advaita Vedanta. They cannot grasp Vedanta. It is not possible for them.

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अजे साम्ये तु ये केचिद्भविष्यन्ति सुनिश्चिताः ।
ते हि लोके महाज्ञानास्तच्च लोको न गाहते ॥Karika 95॥

They alone are said to be of the highest wisdom who are firm in their conviction of the Self, unborn and ever the same. This, ordinary men cannot understand.

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They alone in this world are endowed with the highest wisdom who are firm in their conviction of the sameness and birthlessness of Atman. Like Swami Vivekanada, who was so established in this knowledge of Atman, non-separateness and had highest wisdom. Surprisingly you will find that ethics in India is dictated by Advaita Vedanta, while social practices are dictated by dualism. This is unfortunate. In fact we should have the social system, ethical system, caste system everything based on Advaita Vedanta. If you read my book, The Hindu Way, it tries to do that.

First you have to know that sameness of Atman, secondly the birthlessness of Atman. Acharya Shankar says beautifully that normally people discriminate between men and women. Acharya Shankar says that you have to know firmly and for sure that there cannot

be any kind of discrimination, not even between male and female. Now you might wonder why Acharya Shankar is using the word female. Because today we are talking of equality of females. But Vedanta has been talking about it for thousands of years. Just that there was no listener. And Acharya Shankar said specifically.

Veda say, त्वं स्त्री त्वं पुमानसि त्वं कुमार उत वा कुमारी ।त्वं जीर्णो दण्डेन वञ्चसि त्वं जातो भवसि विश्वतोमुखः - (Oh Lord ! You are a woman, you are a man, you are a boy or a girl. You are old, you walk with a staff, you are born, you are facing all directions".). But somehow we Hindus forgot. That is the problem. We have so many philosophies and most of them are based on separateness. They are based on my God being superior is the Supreme God and everyone else is inferior. Sameness in religion is preached and practiced only by Advaita Vedanta. And none else.

Karika says they alone are wise, who know that there is no distinction whatsoever between man and woman, between men, between women. You can't say that this person is inferior and that person is superior. Vedanta does not accept it. It is really unfortunate that vedanta was not made popular among the masses. It is very unfortunate that our law givers did not establish the laws based on Vedanta. They went more by separateness. What is society? The battle between separateness and and oneness. There are people who are talking about oneness and there are people talking about separateness. Communists became so popular simply because of the political philosophy of oneness. It is a different matter that they did not succeed. But the idea that there has to be oneness and Vedanta has been preaching it for thousands of years now. ते हि लोके महाज्ञानास्तच्च लोको न गाहते.

This is so profound, so profound that an ordinary person, a common man, cannot even understand the way of the wise.

That is why we criticise the greats; you will find many people criticising Shankaracharya. Naturally! They will criticise because they cannot understand the way of the greats! They are too great a person. You will find people criticising Swami Vivekananda. Naturally, because you cannot know their way. Acharya Shankar uses one from Mahabharata Shanti Parva, they way you cannot mark the footprints of a bird in the sky, just like that you cannot know the way of the wise. They are established in equanimity. And that equanimity is born of equality of all souls. Non-separateness of souls and birthlessness of souls. It is simply so profound.

These things are not to be studied. These things are to be contemplated upon. Contemplate and you feel blessed. And its implications are wide. That India could not build its society on the principles of Vedanta, is unfortunate. However, our ethical system was based on Advaita Vedanta. When we say that don't tell lies, it is not because God will be happy, it is God’s

command, it is because when you tell lies you are cheating yourself. Don't hurt anybody- Ahimsa.

Satya, Ahimsa, Asteya, Brahmacharya, aparigraha - These five universal qualities preached by Hindu religion. Truth, non-violence, non-stealing, nonacceptance of gifts and continence. These five are based entirely on Advaita Vedanta. This cannot be explained by religious systems that accept God. You will have to say that God has commanded these. Why should God be commanding like that?

Swami Vivekananda was once asked why he did not marry. He said why should I marry? When my goal is knowledge beyond. Marriage automatically implies separateness. It is too profound a thing.

As far as Advaita, our Hindu religion is concerned, it is so vast and so complicated. Certain things are coming from Advaita Vedanta, certain things from Dvaita, certain things from Vishishta Advaita, and the whole thing is so mixed up that we need to work on it.

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अजेष्वजमसंक्रान्तं धर्मेषु ज्ञानमिष्यते ।

यतो न क्रमते ज्ञानमसंगं तेन कीर्तितम् ॥Karika 96॥

Knowledge (consciousness), the essence of the Jivas (who are unborn), is admitted to be itself unborn and unrelated (to any external object). This knowledge is proclaimed to be unconditioned as it is not related to any other object (which, really speaking does not exist)

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Knowledge is the very essence of unborn Jivas. Jiva is unborn, they never have any birth, and is itself called unborn. So that knowledge itself is unborn, that knowledge is eternal. Knowledge is never born and unrelated. This knowledge is proclaimed to be unattached since it is unrelated to any other object. Remember, we always think that I gain this knowledge. But when you see it from the standpoint of Atman there is no relationship between Jiva and knowledge. Why? Because Jiva is knowledge. That which exists is knowledge - satchidananda. That which exists is Sat, is Chit, assimilated with chit is Ananda. Under normal conditions as we mentioned, Jnata, Jneya, and Jnana - there is a knower, object of knowledge and there is knowledge that connects the two. Here it is said that Atman has all the knowledge. Does it mean that ATman has acquired that knowledge? Is there some kind of relationship between Atman and knowledge? It is not so as Atman is unborn and knowledge is unborn and Atman is knowledge. The way Atman never gets attached to anything of this world, just like that knowledge never gets attached to anything of this world. Atman is knowledge. That is why, when there is self-knowledge, AtmaJnana, the knowledge, knower, object of knowledge, they all become one.

If you believe in the practice of separateness, that is JataVada, if you believe in birth, there are many problems.Whole world is facing problems simply because we believe that we are born,we live and we will die. Every religion, every religious philosophy, every outlook,

everything even a child thinks like that, even the elderly think like that and even the most wise think like that except the Advaita Vedantin.

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अणुमात्रेऽपि वैधर्मे जायमानेऽविपश्चितः ।

असंगता सदा नास्ति किमुताऽऽवरणच्युतिः ॥Karika 97॥

The slightest idea of variety (in Atman) entertained by the ignorant, bars their approach to the unconditioned. The destruction of the veil (covering the real nature of Atman) is out of the question.

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To those ignorant people who believe Atman can deviate from its true nature, even in the slightest measure, its eternally unrelated character is lost. The slightest deviation from its birthlessness and complete knowledge, will destroy the entire thing. In that case destruction of the veil is out of question. That is why in Vishishta Advaita, when it says that Jiva and Ishwar are related like tree and leaf, some kind of separateness has come. some kind of, some element of birth has come. The whole thing is ruined in its entirety. Believe me, the slightest gap, the slightest hair line fracture in philosophy can ruin the entire philosophy. The whole of every religion, every religion, every philosophy, every outlook, suffers from this problem. Of course we don't have time to discuss all that. But if you go back and listen to these talks, we have mentioned once that and if you listen to our inspired talks series, there also you will find these things mentioned. The moment you accept the birth of the souls, in whatever form, even in its purest form the hairline crack has appeared and it will ruin completely your outlook. And there would be gaps and gaps and gaps. Long ago when I was a young Brahmachary, that means novice, our then revered President Maharaj (Srimad Swami Smarananandaji) was teaching us Jnan Yog and it was such a fascinating thing, because, I was too immature to understand Jnana Yog in those days. Srimad Swami Smarananandaji Maharaj was a great admirer of Mandukya Karika, and in those days I did not even know what Mandukya Karika was. Whatever little I grasped from there, I remember one sentence. He said the weakest link of Advaita Vedanta is Maya. I asked Maharaj that it makes it extremely dangerous. Because the strength of the chain is measured by its weakest link. And he said, the thing is that other systems have many more weak links. It never left me. I was a young novice monk and that statement from Srimad Swami Smarananandaji Maharaj, never left me in my life. Yes, you cannot make somebody understand Maya. It is not possible to make anyone understand Maya. But if you take up some other system, it will have gaping holes. And how do you define Maya? Something that is a statement of fact. You experience it all the time. Why do we need to explain? There is a very famous saying in Hindi, Hat Kangan ko arsi kya, Pare Likhe to Farsi kiya? If you put on a bracelet on your hand you don't need a mirror. A mirror is used to see things which you cannot see yourself. What is in a mirror? In earlier times educated people used Farsi

language, and so a person who knew Farsi was considered educated. Just like that Maya is a statement of fact. Why do you need to explain it? The slightest gap that is, is if you believe that Jiva is born in whatever form. It ruins the whole thing. Other than AjataVada, no other philosophy can ever be sound.

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अलब्धावरणाः सर्वे धर्माः प्रकृतिनिर्मलाः ।
आदौ बुद्धास्तथा मुक्ता बुध्यन्त इति नायकाः ॥Karika 98॥

All dharmas (i.e., Jivas) are ever free from bondage and pure by nature. They are ever illumined and liberated from the very beginning. Still the wise speak of the Jivas as capable of knowing ("the ultimate Truth").

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All Jivas are ever free from bondage and pure by nature. They are illumined and free from the very beginning. Yet the wise speak of Jivas as capable of knowing the Ultimate Reality. These are problems with every religion, this is the problem of every religious thought that accepts the separateness of Jiva from the supreme being in the slightest. On the one hand Jiva is believed to have all the knowledge and yet you say that Jiva is capable of knowing the Ultimate truth. How can you say that? All knowledge is within you. All freedom is within you. So what do you mean by saying that you are capable of attaining that? It is to make us understand. For example when Swaiji says that each soul is potentially divine, he was just trying to make us understand. He was not accepting the difference in souls.

The amount of contradiction that is parrotted around by every philosophy and religious philosophy is shocking and sickening. Now people like Ramanujacharya, such a great person. Really great. He saved India. Now these people are extremely intelligent, highly scholarly. Same with Madhwacharya. Now naturally they will come up with such questions that we will not be able to answer them. But that does not take away the fact that if there is one single weakness is Advaita, which is Maya, and they attack on that. Other systems, their own systems have many more fallacies.

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क्रमते न हि बुद्धस्य ज्ञानं धर्मेषु तापि (यि) नः ।
सर्वे धर्मास्तथा ज्ञानं नैतद्बुद्धेन भाषितम् ॥Karika 99॥

The knowledge of the wise one, who is all-light is ever untouched by objects. All the entities as well as the knowledge (which are non-different) are also ever-untouched by any object. This is not the view of the Buddha.

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Here it is being contradicted by Buddhism. Buddhism tries to say certain things. But Gaudapada says that is according to Vedanta. The thing is, it says that all the Jivas have supreme knowledge at all times. And that is all. The knowledge of the wise one, who is all-light is never related to any object. In Buddhist philosophy they also try to say these things. But Gaudapada says, this is actually from Vedanta, all the Jivas and the objects are

unrelated, ever. Acharya Shankar quotes from scriptures to show that this idea has been there in the Upanishads all along. The essence is that Advaita Vedanta, this belongs only to Vedanta. This knowledge cannot be taken away by any one else.

And with that comes the last word. The prayer and the praise.

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दुर्दर्शमतिगम्भीरमजं साम्यं विशारदम् ।

बुद्ध्वा पदमनानात्वं नमस्कुर्मो यथाबलम् ॥ १००॥

Having realised that condition (i.e., knowledge of the Supreme Reality) which is extremely difficult to be grasped, profound, birthless, always the same, all-light, and free from multiplicity, we salute It as best as we can.

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Having realised the knowledge of Supreme reality, which is very hard to grasp, profound, birthless, the same throughout, all-light and free from multiplicity, we salute it as best as we can.

Says Atman and knowledge of Atman are one and the same. This knowledge is extremely difficult to grasp, profound, is birthless, is always there, same throughout- samatwa, equanimity, oneness, all-light - there is no kind of ignorance, free from multiplicity.

We salute it, as best as we can - **नमस्कुर्मो यथाबलम्**. The best that we can, the best way by which we can offer our salutations, we offer our salutations to this knowledge. This is Atman. So on that end Mandukya Karika. It was wonderful being with all of you. And thank you so much for listening to the talks so patiently and I request and I suggest that you listen to these talks again and again whenever you have time. Mandukya Karika is considered to be one of the most difficult of Vedanta and by the grace of the Lord, Lord Sri Ramakrishna, I could complete it. And Yog Sastra says Dirghakala Nairintariya (for a long time and regularly). We did that. Exactly at 4.30 pm on the scheduled day, we have been taking this class unbroken, unless of course I fell ill. And you people have been listening. And this is the greatest of Sadhana that you have performed. With my deepest respect to all of you, here we end this subject. Thank you.

Aum Shanti, Aum Shanti, Aum Shanti, Hari Aum Tat sat.

Sri Ramkrishna Arpanamastu.